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Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Ireland

I.
THE
AUCHINSAUGH COVENANT,
WITH THE
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SINS;
AND
ENGAGEMENT TO DUTIES.

II.
SHORT ACCOUNT
OF
OLD DISSENTERS.

III.
EXPLANATION AND DEFENCE
OF
THE TERMS OF COMMUNION
OF THE
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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THE

NATIONAL COVENANT,

AND

SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT;

WITH THE

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SINS

AND

ENGAGEMENT TO DUTIES;

AS THEY WERE

RENEWED AT AUCHINSAUGH, NEAR DOUGLAS, 24TH JULY, 1712.

WITH ACCOMMODATION TO THE PRESENT TIMES.

COMPARED WITH THE FIRST EDITION, 1712.

PSALM lxxvi. 11.—“Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God.”

ISAIAH xxiv. 5.—“The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.”

EZEKIEL xvii. 18.—“Seeing he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these *things*, he shall not escape.”

TIMOTHY iii. 3.—“Truce-breakers”—or Covenant-breakers.

INTRODUCTION.

COVENANTING with God is the most signal honour to which a people or nation can be exalted in this world; but no nation, under the New Testament dispensation, seems to have been more eminently honoured in this respect than the kingdom of Scotland. So soon as our land emerged out of darkness, and attained the light of evangelical truth, our renowned ancestors, of all ranks, entered into various covenants, to maintain the true religion, betwixt 1557 and 1582, in opposition to all the idolatry and errors of the apostate church of Rome. The chief of these was the National Covenant of Scotland, which was subscribed by the king and his household in the year 1580, and by persons of all ranks, 1581.

After lordly Prelacy had gained the ascendancy over the true Presbyterian religion about forty years, the Second Reformation commenced 1638, and gradually advanced until 1649 inclusive. During that memorable period, great things were done in our land, which we ought ever to keep in grateful remembrance. 1. The National Covenant was renewed, in which all the idolatrous rites of Popery are formally abjured, and by the subscription of it, the Five Articles of Perth, viz., kneeling at the Lord's Supper, private communion in that ordinance, private baptism, confirmation of children, and observation of holy days, the government of the kirk by bishops, and the civil places and power of kirkmen, are declared to be unlawful. 2. The Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms, Scotland, England, and Ireland, was framed and sworn, in which our ancestors, for themselves and posterity, engaged to maintain the true reformed religion; and to endeavour, by all lawful means, to eradicate Popery, Prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and every thing contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness, as plants not planted by their heavenly Father. 3. The Westminster Confession of Faith, as approved, limited, and explained by the Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 27th August, 1647, Sess. 23, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms were composed, as a summary of evangelical doctrine, extracted from, and confirmed by, the Holy Scriptures. 4. Christ's alone supremacy over his church,

set by his Father over his holy hill of Sion, and given by him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body; together with her intrinsic right to call, adjourn, and dissolve her Assemblies at pleasure, whether the civil magistrate give his sanction or not, was expressly asserted by the church. 5. The Divine right of Presbyterian church government, as the only form revealed in the Word of God, in opposition to the idolatrous forms of Popery, the superstitious hierarchy of Prelacy, and the sectarian confusion of the different orders of Independency, was legally established according to Scripture rule. 6. Patronage, that great evil which robs the Christian people of the privilege of choosing those pastors who are to take the oversight of their precious and immortal souls, was legally abolished, and the church restored to that liberty wherewith Christ hath made his church and people free. 7. The Estates of Parliament also enacted, that all kings and princes who shall reign over this realm shall solemnly swear to observe and defend the true reformed religion, according to the Word of God; and by and attour the foresaid oath shall declare, by his solemn oath and seal, his allowance of the *National Covenant* and of the *Solemn League and Covenant*, and obligation to pursue the ends thereof in his station and calling.—*Collection of Acts*, p. 141.

These covenants (viz., the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant,) constituted the formal marriage relation between Jehovah and the United Kingdoms, and were the condition of admission to office and privilege. On account of them we were called Hephzibah and Beulah, a land delighted in, and married to the Lord. While we were faithful to God, he was good and gracious to us, and allowed us eminent times of refreshing from his presence. But when we forsook him, he also forsook us, and gave us up to counsels of our own, and we have vainly wandered ever since. By admitting the enemies of reformation into places of power and trust—by the Public Resolutions—by submitting to the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell—and by the unhappy restoration of Charles II., without any security in favours of the true religion, our gold became dim—our most fine gold was changed. A bloody persecution commenced against the friends of the reformation, which raged with great violence twenty-eight years. Our solemn covenants were disregarded, their obligation denied, and the deeds themselves ignominiously burnt, in London, Edinburgh, and Linlithgow. By authority, the taking or the administering of them was declared to be sedition and treason; and defending them by word or write was accounted criminal in law. All Acts made in their favours, or in favours of the work of reformation between 1638 and 1650, were rescinded, and such black oaths, bonds, tests,

and indulgences were imposed, as ensnared and polluted the consciences of all who accepted of, or agreed to them. About 18,000 Presbyterians are supposed to have suffered persecution in one form or another, by imprisonment, banishment, tortures and death, from 1660 to 1668. The principal heads of their sufferings may be reduced to three. 1. Refusing to renounce the covenants, and to declare it unlawful to enter into deeds of that kind without consent of the civil magistrate. 2. Denying the king's supremacy over the church, according to Act of Parl. 16, Nov. 1669, in which it is enacted, asserted, and declared—"That his Majesty hath the supreme authority and supremacy over all persons, and in all causes ecclesiastical, within this kingdom; and that, by virtue thereof, the ordering and disposing of the external government and policy of the church doth properly belong to his majesty and his successors, as an inherent right to the crown," &c. 3. Refusing to acknowledge the authority of the Duke of York, as he was a professed Papist, an open enemy to the true religion, a tyrant over the liberties of the nation, and a violent persecutor of the faithful friends and followers of the Lamb. The pious Mr. James Renwick was the last who sealed the church's testimony with his blood on a public scaffold, and triumphantly entered into the joy of his Lord.

The nation, weary of the tyranny and oppression of James VII., agreed to dismiss him from the throne, and to invite William and Mary, Prince and Princess of Orange, to come over and assume the reins of government in these kingdoms. At their accession, the nations did not improve the opportunity afforded them, to have church and state settled according to the Word of God, and to the reforming laws of the land; but left the covenants and work of reformation buried under the infamous Act Recissory. Our renowned ancestors entered their public protestation against said settlement, both civil and ecclesiastic, at the market cross of Sanquhar, because the king was not a professor of the true religion;—did not take the covenants, according to the established law of the nation;—was engaged by his coronation oath to maintain Prelacy inviolable, to the latest posterity, contrary to the second commandment and Solemn League and Covenant;—was vested with a sinful headship over the church, in being declared head over all persons and causes, civil and ecclesiastical;—and established two forms of religion, as agreeable to the inclination of the people, though in direct opposition to one another, without any regard to the Holy Scriptures, as the alone rule of either;—because many of the constituent members of the Convention of Estates had an active hand in murdering the precious saints of God during the late persecution;—and because the Parliament of Scotland read,

judged, voted, and ratified the Westminster Confession of Faith for the whole Church of Scotland, without consulting with her, more or less on the subject, which was gross Erastianism. They also dissented from and protested against the ecclesiastical constitution, because the ministers who composed the first Assembly after the revolution were composed of the indulged and curates that had complied with the evils of the times, during the persecution : had taken some of the sinful oaths, bonds, tests, or indulgences, during that period ; and many of them grievously reproached the honest sufferers, so that they had no right to come near unto God to do the office of a priest unto him until they were cleansed, according to the purification of the sanctuary ; —they passed over the best time of our reformation and went back to 1592, when the church's attainments were not come to their greatest purity.

By thus overlooking the steps of reformation attained to, between the years 1638 and 1650, they violated the Divine precept—" Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing," Phil. iii. 16. They submitted to new ministerial qualifications, viz., the oaths of allegiance and assurance, substituted and imposed in room of the covenants, under ecclesiastical pains and censures, as deprivation, suspension, and the like. Such qualifications, fixed and appointed by the civil magistrate for gospel ministers, as a condition of the exercise of their office, was injurious to the Headship of Christ, and to the intrinsic power of the church ; and was, in the very nature of it, downright Erastianism : and ministers tamely submitting to them, was a surrendering the church's rights to a foreign head, and discovered great want of fidelity to Sion's King. They allowed the king to call, adjourn, and dissolve their Assemblies at his pleasure, and sometimes without transacting any business at all ; and they complied with his command, to receive into their communion all the curates that would qualify according to law, without requiring any evidence of repentance, or inflicting any censure upon them for their former corrupt and superstitious principles and practices.

However, all things considered, little better could be expected from the state of the nation at that time. The most religious and faithful ministers and people had either been put to death or banished during the persecution ; and it could not be thought that the Laodicean compliers with the backsliding courses of that period would be honoured to build up Sion's walls, and to settle her on her true Scriptural covenanted foundation. These were not the materials proper for erecting anew the ancient Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland. After the death of that faithful minister and martyr of Jesus Christ, Mr. James

Renwick, the surviving friends of the cause for which he suffered, came to be unhappily divided in judgment among themselves.

As the sword of persecution was now sheathed, and external peace restored, it was natural to desire ease and quiet; and those who should have been examples to the little flock of Christ, proved a snare to them. The truth of the prophet's declaration was verified—"The leaders of this people cause them to err." Their public teachers, Messrs. Shields, Linning, and Boyd, carried them down the stream of defection, and seduced them into a sinful compliance with the evils of the time. 1. They encouraged them to take up arms to guard the Convention of Estates, many of the members of which had their hands deeply imbrued in the blood of God's dear saints during the late persecution. 2. They enticed them to raise the Angus regiment, and to join in a military association with malignants to a covenanted work of reformation, contrary to their professed principles, and to the express prohibition of Scripture—"Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy." Many of them repented of this action afterwards, and blamed Mr. Shields to his face for leading them into it. 3. They advised them to address William and the Parliament concerning their grievances about religion, which many of them had scruples in doing, as they were suspicious that William's principles were not favourable to the covenants and work of reformation; and the more faithful part were afraid, that petitioning the Parliament might be viewed as an acknowledgment of the members of it as the lawful representatives of the nation, while the greatest part of them were disqualified from holding such an office on account of the active hand which they had taken in persecuting the faithful followers of the Lamb, and in destroying, suppressing, and subverting the covenanted reformation, and had given no evidence of repentance for their sinful conduct therein. 4. They induced them to enter rashly into the renovation of the covenants at Lesmahago, without due time to consider on the importance of the work, and to seek sanctuary preparation for sanctuary service—to ponder seriously the sins confessed, and the duties to which they engaged, which many of themselves regretted afterwards. 5. They exhorted them to join with unfaithful complying ministers, under a pretence of entering a protestation and remonstrance, and receiving a right to testify against every thing which they judged wrong, though the constitution itself was settled on an unscriptural foundation. 6. They carried as many of them as they could along with themselves into the communion of the revolution church, and landed them in the quagmire of Erastianism.

But the Lord still preserved a select few who did not defile their garments with these corruptions. Sir Robert Hamilton,

in the first General Meeting which he attended, held at Douglas, 6th Nov. 1689, after his return from Holland, entered his protest against these and similar steps of defection and compliance; and, at a future meeting, refused to accept of a commission for drawing up a representation of grievances, and a protestation against defections, to be given in to a general meeting of ministers, and afterwards a General Assembly, in connexion with persons of such jarring opinions and practices: especially with Messrs. Shields, Linning, and Boyd, whom he considered as equally guilty, if not more so, than the complying ministers of the time. Sir Robert was justly held in estimation by the community of Old Dissenters.

He went over to Holland soon after the battle of Bothwell Bridge; and, during his residence there, proved of eminent service to the sufferers for the truth in Scotland. He acted as their commissioner, to represent their case, and solicit the sympathy of the church there: and, by his attention and fidelity, he prevailed with the Presbytery of Groningen to ordain the pious and faithful Mr. James Renwick a minister of the gospel, for the persecuted true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland; and afterwards, as their delegate to the Presbytery of Embden, he induced them to ordain Mr. Thomas Linning a minister of the gospel for the same church. Some time after his return to Scotland, when the three teachers foresaid had deserted the noble cause which they had formerly espoused, and, by their advice and example, had drawn many into a state of apostacy along with themselves, Sir Robert stepped in and lifted up the testimony, as Mr. Renwick left it, and was the honoured instrument in the Lord's hand of collecting, out of their dispersed state, such of the old sufferers as had escaped the general contagion and defection, and united them together in praying societies, for their spiritual improvement—and in correspondent and general meetings for managing their public concerns. Never do piety and faithfulness appear to have been more eminent among Dissenters than during this period: their private religious exercises by themselves, with their families, and in their societies, were refreshing and comfortable;—they had frequently days of fasting and humiliation, for mourning over their sins, and those of a guilty land; and, on these days, they expressed an ardent desire after the public ordinances of religion, and were very earnest in their supplications that the Lord would prepare, qualify, and send a faithful gospel minister to break the bread of life to them, and to discover unto them the reason why this great blessing was withheld from them.

Sir Robert was apprehended and imprisoned in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, for having an hand in publishing the Sanquhar declaration; and was called different times before the council,

but he declined them as competent judges, because they were not qualified according to the Word of God and our solemn covenants. He would make no acknowledgment whatever of any thing wrong in his conduct, nor make any promise or engagement to act differently from what he had done; and he was so honest to his principles, that, before his liberation, he gave in a most faithful protestation and declinature to the Privy Council and Parliament of Scotland—sent a letter of the same import to Sir James Stuart, the advocate; and, upon coming out of the tolbooth, he left another protestation in the hands of the keepers, against his unjust imprisonment; and showing his firm adherence to the cause for which he had suffered, declaring, at the same time, that his outcoming was merely on account of his finding open doors, and desiring his protestation to be inserted in the ordinary register.

From his liberation to the time of his death, he contended earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, and acted the part of a tender father and affectionate friend to the faithful few that continued witnessing for the truth; and by his pious example and judicious counsel, he encouraged and exhorted them to attend seriously to the concerns of their souls, and to the genuine principles of the testimony which they held. After having maintained Christian communion with them for several years, and drawing near the conclusion of his life, he left a faithful testimony behind him to the cause and testimony of Christ, which is contained in the *Christian's Conduct* and in the *Scots Worthies*. He died in peace, 21st October, 1701.—Aged 51 years.

After the death of Sir Robert Hamilton, not many years intervened until God sent them that seasonable gift, the Rev. Mr. John M'Millan, minister of Balmaghie, who, from the time of his ordination, showed a strong attachment to the covenanted principles of the Reformed Church of Scotland. The treatment which he met with from the judicatories of the Revolution church, and a vindication of his character and conduct against numerous misrepresentations, may be seen in the Appendix to Thorburn's *Vindiciæ Magistratus*, published 1773, and in the *Short Account of Old Dissenters*, 1806. Many severe things have been published against him of late years, about *Balmaghie business*, when very few know the circumstances and motives from which he acted. As the pastoral relation had been fixed between him and the people of the parish of Balmaghie, he seems to have been desirous that they should embrace reformation principles, and the majority were greatly attached to his ministry, stood firmly by him, and kept him in possession of the manse, kirk, and glebe, for many years, in opposition to the tyrannical Acts both of church and state. The grievances of which he com-

plained in the church, they considered as grievances also. When he received and accepted a call from the community of Old Dissenters, about the year 1707, he, at the earnest request of his old parishioners, continued with them for a number of years. He is blamed for sitting in session with Erastian elders. He did sit in session with the elders of his parish, who were not come to the clear light of separating from the Established Church altogether; but they were far from approving of any thing like Erastianism in her, and he wished to give time for examining into principle. Insinuations have been made that his great motive for continuing with that people, was his lusting after the stipends of Balmaghie. This calumny confutes itself; if he had been a man greedy of filthy lucre, he would never have given up his comfortable habitation, and the legal stipend in that parish, for any thing that Dissenters could give him; and, if he would have withdrawn his paper of grievances, he might have enjoyed all the emoluments annexed to his official situation for life. No judicious reason could be assigned why he should have given up such a profitable living, except a real regard to the reformation cause, and holding the testimony of a good conscience. Much against the inclination of his adherents in Balmaghie, he left the parish altogether and came to Clydesdale about the year 1727, and spent the remainder of his life in dispensing Gospel ordinances in the community of Old Dissenters, to their edification and comfort.

Mr. M'Neil, preacher, joined with Mr. M'Millan about the year 1708. So soon as Old Dissenters were favoured with a Gospel minister and preacher to their satisfaction, they took into their consideration the obligation lying upon them, by virtue of our solemn covenants, to rescue them from the state of contempt and oblivion under which they had lien above fifty years. In their correspondent and general meetings they proposed setting about renewing them in a way suited to their circumstances; and after spending many days in fasting, humiliation, and prayer, in their private societies, for light and direction, they agreed that this was a duty which God called for at their hands, as they were now the only people, that held the testimony of the martyrs, who suffered for their adherence to the covenanted cause. They then set about the necessary preparation, by encouraging one another to personal covenanting, and explaining the covenants, article by article, in every society; and the members were examined carefully, one by one, as to their knowledge of the contents of the deeds which they were to swear. On account of the great pains taken for the instruction of the people, by the more judicious members, by the elders, and by the minister and preacher whom they then had, it is probable that never any religious body of men entered into these

solemn transactions, and swore the covenants, with more judgment; and the impressions of that work continued with many of them to their dying day.

Auchensaugh Deed has long deservedly held a distinguished place in the public profession of Old Dissenters. It contains the reasons which induced our ancestors, at that time, to enter upon the renovation of our solemn covenants, in a way adapted to their peculiar circumstances; the manner of proceeding in the work; the seasonableness of it; the difficulties attending it; the encouragements to it; the vindication of it, as present duty; and the obviating of objections raised against it, both as to substance and manner. The National and Solemn League and Covenant are next added, with marginal references, adapting certain clauses to the peculiar circumstances of the Covenanters at that time, with an explicit Declaration at the conclusion of them (in large print), that they only swore them in their private station, in their genuine sense, according to the explication and application thereof, in their present acknowledgment of the public sins and breaches of the same; and in their engagement to duties contained therein, which did, in a special way, relate to their times, and were proper for their capacities therein. This acknowledgment, containing a particular enumeration of the sins, whereby each article of the Solemn League had been violated, with an application of the Holy Scriptures to said violation, and the engagement to duties, in opposition to said sins, are subjoined. By this deed our renowned ancestors brought themselves and their successors formally under the obligation of the covenants, which the nations had broken and ignominiously burnt; exemplified how a small minority ought to adhere to public covenants under apostacy; distinguished the substance of the covenants from their accidents; brought the covenants and the breach of them to Scriptural test, by adding suitable texts; and specified those sins, national, ecclesiastical, and personal, which provoked God to plead a controversy with the whole land, and caused him to go to his place, to see if they would acknowledge their offences, and seek him early. They also engaged, in the strength of Divine grace, to perform covenanted duties, so far as competent to them in their different relations.

The approbation of this transaction was a condition of admission into the community of Old Dissenters, from the time that it was sworn; and, when the Reformed Presbytery was first constituted, 1743, it was formally established, and announced as a special term of communion, and continued so until the year 1800; when it was united with the article acknowledging the obligation of the covenants, National and Solemn League, upon posterity. Still it was retained as a condition of church fellow-

ship, without the least motion to remove it from the terms altogether.

In stating the reasons why our church ought to retain this deed in our terms of communion, it is not intended to ascribe any improper motives to, nor to cast any injurious reflections upon, those who wish to remove it from its present place, and to class it among the deeds of general reference. Charity obliges us to believe that they are acting according to their views. Nor is it meant to insinuate that our brethren do not agree to the same truths here stated, taken abstractly;—but, considered in the character of witnesses for the covenanted cause and testimony of Jesus Christ, the friends of this work think that we ought to connect the great substance of that deed with our religious exercise at the Lord's Supper. And I fondly hope, that those who are acquainted with the earnest struggling, and faithful contending, which our forefathers had to get it carried through, and with the gracious discoveries of the Divine presence which attended it, will feel disposed to retain it for the following reasons:—

1. As it was a signal attainment, and an eminent document of the church's faithfulness—a part of the faith once delivered to the saints; and having received it into our public profession, as agreeable to the Scriptures, we ought to hold it fast without wavering, to contend earnestly for it—and, at a sacramental table, to be exercised about its contents, as it relates to the coming of Christ's kingdom and interest in the world.

2. As it brings us under formal obligation to perform our part of the solemn covenants, after the nation at large has violated them, and prevents us from partaking with them in their sin of apostacy. As the covenants were the condition of admission to privileges in the reformation church, so we by this deed recognize them as the condition of admission to privilege in our church still.

3. As it adapts the national deeds to the case of a minority desirous to be faithful to God, and conscientious in performing covenant-duties to a covenant-keeping God. However small our number, or however mean our situation in life, we may claim our marriage-relation by covenant to him, and avouch him, over the separated symbols of bread and wine, as our own God.

4. We receive the Lord's Supper, under the banner of a testimony displayed for truth, of which this deed is a part. As witnesses for Christ, we profess to be grieved for the afflictions of Joseph, and to lament over the breaches of covenant, which offend a holy God and cause him hide his face from his ordinances and people, so that it is not with them as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon them. As we ought

to have common friends and common enemies with Christ, we ought to oppose all backsliding courses which this deed instructs us to do.

5. In this holy ordinance, his own people, when admitted into gracious nearness with God, and enjoying comfortable fellowship with him, have an opportunity of pleading with him on account of the low state of Zion, and praying for a revival in her bondage, that he would return to our long desolations where he had his habitation in time past, and yet make his Jerusalem a praise in the earth; and they plead, on the footing of his covenant with them, that he will be a covenant-keeping God.

6. In this ordinance, we are warranted to plead for covenant-blessings, graciously annexed to covenant-keeping—Psal. xxv. 10, and ciii. 18; and to pray that God would remember his covenant made with our fathers, and yet return to these covenanted lands and take up his habitation as in the days of old.

7. As the breaches of covenant specified in this deed are still standing grounds of God's controversy, not nationally repented of nor turned from, we should be religiously exercised at the Lord's table, that we may have grace to keep clean garments in the midst of evil times, and be found sighing and crying on account of the abominations done in the midst of the land.

8. Removing this deed from its proper place has a tendency to produce division in the church, which is too much divided already. Although no injury were done to truth by the proposed removal, there are many religious members of our church who know what exercises have been in her, on communion occasions, about the contents of this deed, that durst not consent to the alteration.

9. It is a virtual condemnation of the conduct of our pious ancestors for making it a term of communion, and using it as such for a century bygone. If the deed were proved morally evil in itself, and we were certain that they had dishonoured God every time that they approached a communion table, with full approbation of the spirit and scope of it, it would be a very different thing; but no person, who knows what manner of men they were, will venture to form such a judgment of them.

10. Removing this deed has a tendency to hurt all friendly confidence in church rulers. If they remove this deed now, they may remove another again, until none be left. No human composition can lay claim to perfection, and all the books of our subordinate standards require to be qualified, limited and explained. The Church of Scotland received the Westminster Confession of Faith with limitation and explanation. The martyrs did the same, and our church has all along received the whole of her subordinate standard books in this way, and has

declared, in her testimony, the sense in which she understands them.

With these views, it cannot reasonably be expected that the genuine friends of this work could, in their judgment and with a safe conscience, give their consent to pass sentence of perpetual banishment upon it from our terms of communion. A majority being against it, could not change their minds. Yet for the sake of peace in the church they could agree to any reasonable qualification, explanation, or limitation, that might promote the general good.

It may by some be objected here—If the knowledge of this deed is of such importance, what is the reason that it has been so little read and known? A. The fault of this greatly attaches to us who are ministers. Our fathers taught the contents of it in their ordinary ministrations; and few sabbaths passed but the breach of covenant, idolatry, superstition, and other sins specified in it, were publicly exposed; the judgments threatened in the Word of God against these sins were declared, and a warning was given to seek chambers of safety. In prayer, these sins were also confessed, and the pardon of them implored;—in their table-services, they united personal religion with the glory of Christ's kingdom, so that the substance of this work was familiar to the members of our church. But since a generation of lukewarm Laodicean professors arose, who do not wish to hear any thing of a public doctrinal testimony for the kingly prerogatives of Jesus, real religion has greatly declined among us, and practical immorality greatly increased. Personal, family, and social religion are much neglected, and the public ordinances much despised;—tipling and drunkenness greatly prevail, and uncleanness (a sin long unknown in our church,) abounds notoriously among us;—and have we not cause to fear that, living so long in the omission of the duty of public covenanting, has provoked God's displeasure against us, so as to give us up to counsels of our own, and allow us to wander after the sinful imaginations of our own corrupt hearts, and to follow the multitude of other denominations to do evil?

It has been objected against this deed, that it contains an engagement to pay no taxes, *directly* nor *indirectly*, to the present government. A. Although this has been often said, by both ministers and people, it is a great mistake. There never was such a sentence in it; nor is *directly* or *indirectly* ever mentioned along with paying taxes. Our forefathers well knew, that no government could exist without taxes; but they distinguished between those that were exacted for the immediate support of government, and those that were imposed on the necessities of life. Themselves purchased salt, leather and ale, and used these as the creatures of God, to which they had a moral

right by his own law, without asking any questions for conscience' sake, though these articles were taxed ; and they thought the Active Testimony people went to a right-hand extreme, when they imported and smuggled their salt and shoes from Ireland. The members of our church have never, since the revolution, paid tribute or stipend, as a matter of right, to the nation's rulers, civil or ecclesiastical ; but under protestation, that they had no other title to them than what the superior strength of a majority gives over a minority, when nothing respecting religion is concerned. Mr. Herle, prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, answers an objection similar to what may be stated against this. This payment is taken and will be used to an evil end. " But," says he, " that is beyond my deliberation, and not in my power to prevent ; it will not be avoided by putting them to force it from me, but rather more gain will accrue to them, if I stand out." It has been alleged that Dissenters would not pay taxes themselves, but hired others to pay them for them. This, no judicious man among them, acting in character, ever did ; and if any weak mind should have done so, this is nothing against the profession itself. Some satisfied their minds as to the payment of public burdens, such as the supply, minister's stipend, and schoolmaster's salary, by viewing them as *onus terræ*, or a burden on the lands ; and, whether paid by the landlord or tenant, that it was no debt of theirs. The landlord paid nothing for it—the sum of it was deduced from the rental when he purchased the property, and he is only the holder of it, for the time being, in behalf of the possessors of the offices to which it is annexed, who have sufficient physical power to command it. If the tenant pay it, he has value for it, as he rents his land so much cheaper on account of these burdens. The great body of farmers, however, preferred a freedom from these burdens altogether, and many landlords were disposed to favour them, as they had a scruple at paying them, and some do so still.

I shall here add the opinion of the oldest reverend father in our church, when an objection was made in the year 1796 respecting the inconsistency between Auchensaugh Bond and our Testimony, concerning the paying of taxes. Says he—" The Presbytery equally (as Auchensaugh people) disapprove of the constitution as Erastian and anti-covenanted, and of whatever in its own nature implies a real acknowledgment of them (i. e. the rulers,) as lawful ; but they do not think that, submitting to public burdens, even though oppressive laid upon a people in common by a prevailing power, amounts to any more than a passive acknowledgment that might is on the side of the oppressor ; and, therefore, whatever inconsistency may be in expressions, there is no real and substantial difference or opposition

between Auchensauth work and the Presbytery's testimony. They are the same in their spirit, as appears from the particular and cautious explication given by the Presbytery, towards the conclusion of their testimony, which, if duly and impartially attended to, might contribute to remove our brethren's scruples on that head."

It has been objected, that this deed engages not to go to law before the present rulers. A. Our ancestors were of opinion, that no person could go to law without recognizing the lawfulness of the authority; but our testimony, p. 170, foot note, limits and explains this subject. I write with diffidence here, lest self-interest should lead into mistake; but I think it is possible to apply to the rulers of any society whatever for redress of acts of injustice done by their members contrary to their own law, when there is nothing required that may either recognize the lawfulness of the society or of its rulers. But if differences can be settled by fair arbitration of honest men, it is surely preferable, as there may be forms in fencing courts, loyalty of language in course of the process, and other involvements, that a judicious and conscientious Dissenter would find difficulty in approving; and the less he is engaged in that way, so much the better.

It has also been objected to this deed, that our forefathers were of anti-tolerant principles. A. Our ancestors, and all honest Presbyterians, were against all authoritative toleration of gross heresy, idolatry, blasphemy, and Popery, and were for restraining such as disturbed the peace of church and state, by opposing the covenanted uniformity. Such as know the situation in which they were placed, are sensible that they had to build with the one hand, and defend the work with the other. They had both Prelacy and the Sectaries to contend with, and both equally opposed the establishment of Presbytery, according to the Word of God. I am aware that punishing with *civil pains* has been much exclaimed against by Glass and his Independent brethren, by several ministers of the Relief Church, and by lukewarm Presbyterians in different churches. The following defence of our Reformers on that head has been made by a friend to the reformation cause. His opponent states that under all *civil pains* might be included confiscation of goods, imprisonment, banishment, forfeiting of life and fortune. His reply is—"I have heard it affirmed by such as are well acquainted with our Scots laws, that unless the law expressly declares *death* to be the punishment, or mentions the pains of treason, any other penalty, even the highest annexed to any Parliamentary statute, cannot be construed in law to amount to *death*; and that, when the punishment is *all civil pains*, the judge is at liberty to proportion the punishment to the nature of

the crime and the quality of the offender; and, therefore, where the covenant was enjoined under all civil pains, it appears to me that no more was intended than that the refusers of the covenant should not be admitted into places of power and trust, and this, I humbly judge, may be very well vindicated." After quoting the clause of the Act after *all civil pains*, he subjoins—"Here the reader may observe, that no higher penalty is decerned against such refusers than excluding them from voice in Parliament."

The universal Sovereign of the world has a right to give laws, and to annex penalties to the breach of them, which no creature has a right to change. Our ancestors desired no more than that the open violation of God's law should be punished as that law requires, and they knew no right of conscience to authorize a man to trample upon the law of his Creator.—*See this subject judiciously discussed in Wylie's Sons of Oil*, pp. 48, 49, and in *Brown's Letters on Toleration*.

In concluding this Introduction, I would seriously advise my brethren in the ministry, while I would also take the advice to myself, to observe the signs of the times, the visible symptoms of approaching judgments, and, as faithful watchmen on Sion's towers, to set the judgment-trumpet to their mouths, to cry aloud and not to spare, but to show Jacob their sins and Israel their transgressions, and to warn the wicked of the evil of their ways, lest they perish in their wickedness, and the Lord require their blood at the watchman's hand. Comparing our situation with that of Israel and Judah, we will find a strong resemblance; and we ought to follow the example of the prophets in warning the generation of their danger. Breach of covenant, gross idolatry, shameful adultery, obstinate rebellion against God, wilful rejection of the Gospel, persecution of the servants and saints of God, and incorrigibleness under judgments, were the sins which procured the righteous judgments of God against his people. These same sins, with the additional aggravation of being committed under the clear dispensation of the Gospel, are raging among us. We are therefore called upon to warn the nations of their danger from the approaching judgments of God, except they repent, and turn from the evil of their ways, before it be too late; and to invite the people of God to come into the chambers of safety until the indignation be overpast. In this way, although the wicked die in his iniquity, we shall have delivered our own souls.

I would also beseech the members of the church to study vital religion, and to make sure work of their own personal conversion. A form of godliness, without the power thereof, will be of small importance when you come to die. Be assured, brethren, it is not your being for or against the following deed, as a term of communion, that will evidence you to be the real

friends of Christ. Many on both sides are ready to go to extremes, and to calumniate the characters of one another, and of the ministers of religion, very wickedly. Severe, harsh, and intemperate language, does no honour to either party. A good cause does not need it, and a bad one cannot be supported by it.—Count the cost, and consider seriously, what is necessary to constitute you faithful witnesses for Christ and his truth. You must, 1. have spiritual life, without which you can perform no living service to God. 2. Knowledge of doctrine, principle and duty, from the Holy Scriptures, without which you cannot distinguish between truth and error. 3. Living faith in the atonement of Christ, without which you cannot please God. 4. Genuine love to God, without which you cannot obey his commandments. 5. You must make a scriptural confession of the name of Christ with your mouth, before men, by worshipping him in spirit and in truth, without which you cannot be his disciples. 6. You must adorn all, by maintaining a conversation as becometh the Gospel of Christ, without which you cannot glorify God. I would rejoice to see our church composed of such members. I have no doubt that there are many such in her. I do not mean at all to degrade her. I believe our principles are better than those of others, and that our people are no worse. Still we need a revival in point of practical religion, and a more accurate knowledge of our public profession.—Attend the ordinances of the Gospel with holy diligence, and endeavour to profit under them. Esteem a soul-searching ministry highly, where the unbelief, corruption, enmity, deceitfulness, and desperate wickedness of the heart are laid open. This will prove of infinitely more consequence than a showy address, elegant language, theatrical gesture, vain boasting of boundless liberality and new-fangled innovations. These may please the carnal fancy, but can afford no relief to sin-sick souls. The apostle says, “My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of men’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” Great talents will not supply the place of faithfulness to the cause of Christ. Mr. Shields seems to have had more depth of theological knowledge than Messrs. Cameron, Cargill, and Renwick, united together, and yet they were honoured to seal the testimony of Jesus with their blood, while Mr. Shields, after having drawn many after him into apostacy by sinful compliance, died in a foreign land, unknown and unlamented.—Beware of association that may lead you aside from your received principles, or draw you into a confederacy with them that have said a confederacy against Christ and his cause. Union among Christians is a most desirable object when it has truth and holiness at the foundation. It is in the promise that God will give his people one heart and one way; Jer. xxxii.

39; and they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion, Isa. lii. 8. Then, and not till then, will the friends of Christ unite cordially together. In all proposed unions of different denominations, it ought to be seriously considered, if the grounds on which they were formerly separate be removed;—if either or both parties have changed to the better;—if the corrupt parts of their principles, which led to the stating of a public testimony against them, be relinquished;—and if nothing of this kind has been done, no union in the way of truth can be effected. In joining popular societies, we are to judge of their systems, not by feelings, or mere outward appearances, but according to the Holy Scriptures. We are carefully to examine if the constitution be according to the Divine Word;—if the rulers be the open friends or enemies of the true religion;—if the persons sent to dispense the ordinances of religion be sent according to the Divine Rule;—if the ordinances dispensed by them be dispensed according to the Word;—and if the effects produced be such as the Scripture accounts good fruits. If these be wanting, no inward piety, no common gifts or talents, no anxiety to do good, are sufficient to constitute a Christian minister. The Scripture does not say, How shall they preach, except they be pious? except they be gifted? except they be in earnest to do good? but, How shall they preach except they be *sent*? No rapturous emotions of joy, no awful feelings of terror, no common illumination of the Spirit; not even being made partakers of the heavenly gift, or having tasted of the powers of the world to come, will certainly evidence the reality of religion in the soul, without spiritual life by union to Christ, a scriptural knowledge of God, in the revealed perfections of his nature, genuine faith in Christ, embracing him in all his offices, repentance unto life, and evangelical holiness.—It is a great gift to be able to try and discern the spirits whether they be of God; for many false teachers are gone out into the world. Satan's ministers, transformed as the ministers of righteousness, have deceived many. O pray much, that you may be preserved from their corrupt influence.

Let parents remember the solemn responsibility, which attaches to them in bringing up their children, in the good old way of the Covenanted Reformation, according to their baptismal engagements.—Let children attend to the vows of God which lie upon them, to renounce the service of the Devil, the world, and the flesh; to abstain from all appearance of evil, and not to touch, taste, nor handle, with the insnaring amusements of this degenerate age; but earnestly to pray that the Lord would give them the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, keep them from the paths in which destroyers go, and prepare them, by his grace, for his everlasting kingdom.—Amen.

The reason of publishing this deed at present is, on account of its scarceness, that the members of the church may have the opportunity of pursuing it with religious attention; and may plead with the Lord at a throne of grace that he would have respect to his covenant, and keep his church and people faithful to himself in the midst of evil days.

It is to be observed that the following work is now approved by the church, as it is qualified, limited, and explained in her public testimony. And, that it may be blessed for promoting the glory of God, and the peace and prosperity of Zion, is the sincere desire of

THOMAS HENDERSON.

KILMACOLM, }
24th December, 1819. }

N.B.—The writer alone is responsible for the contents of the Introduction and Appendix.

P R E F A C E.

It is the ineffable product of eternal love and infinite condescension in God towards his rational creatures that ever he was pleased to make a covenant with them, and not to command and require obedience to his holy and just will, by virtue of his most absolute supremacy and rightful dominion only; but even to superadd sweet and precious promises, as a reward of that obedience which he might of right have required, without giving any such incitements or persuasives to it. And as no tongue of men or angels is sufficient to express, no strength of imagination to conceive, no sublimity of intellectual faculties to comprehend the depth of that spring, and breadth of that ocean of unbounded love, which hath exerted itself in God's covenanting with man—yea, with sinful man, by means of a Mediator—so shall it always afford matter of wonder and admiration to all finite and intelligent beings to the ages of eternity, and shall never be comprehended by any but by Him whose understanding is infinite; wherefore He, who is all-sufficient and self-sufficient, should invite, yea, press and entreat unworthy, indigent nothings, the sinful children of men, to such an incomparable degree of honour, dignity, and advancement as that is, to enter into a covenant relation, and come into a solemn treaty of peace and conjunction with Him, who is infinitely removed beyond all blessing and all praise. To have this invitation is indeed the honour and privilege of all within the visible church to whose ears the joyful sound of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ hath come; but few are so wise as to accept and improve it. Many, too many, account themselves unworthy of this honour, and, by despising this privilege, and rejecting this dignity, deprive themselves of the greatest happiness; but as all nations upon whom the day-star of the Gospel hath arisen have had the invitation to this duty, and all sound and real believers have actually participated of this honour, to have God making a covenant with them, and they striking hands with Him through a Mediator (which covenant is commonly termed the *Covenant of Grace*), so these three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland conjunctly, and Scotland by itself, as an independent nation, had, in an eminent way and manner, the

honour, above most nations in the world, to dedicate and surrender themselves to the Lord, by a most voluntary, free and deliberate choice, and to come under the bond of a most solemn oath, in a most religious manner devoting their all to Christ, his interest and honour, the flourishing and thriving of his kingdom, the success of his Gospel, and reformation of his churches; and openly avouching him for their Lord and Master, to the honour of his name and confusion of his enemies; which *Covenants National* and *Solemn League*, though we look not upon them to be the same with the covenant of grace, yet we conceive of them, as a solemn superadded and new obligation, tying us to all the duties, as well of a particular Christian conversation, as these which tend to the public and national advancement of reformation in religion, whereof the covenant of grace is the spring and foundation.

These covenants, as they were the effects and consequents of many remarkable and signal expressions of divine love and goodness, many singular mercies and deliverances vouchsafed to these nations as the return of many earnest prayers and wrestlings of the Lord's people with him, so they were the occasions of many blessings, and great indications of God's favour and loving-kindness. Then the Lord delighted to dwell in the nations; then did he beautify the place of his sanctuary; then did he fill his people's hearts with joy and gladness, by the familiar intimations of his special love and down-pourings of his Spirit's gracious influences, as our land can afford many instances. Then did he enlarge his people's affections, and animate their spirits with zeal and courage, attended with knowledge, prudence, and discretion to act for him and advance his kingdom. Then did he illustrate his churches in these kingdoms, as bright and sparkling stars arising out of the thick clouds of antichristian darkness, and getting out from under Prelatic and Erastian yokes of bondage and slavery, and made them go forth as the meridian sun, glorious and excellent, *terrible as an army with banners*. Hence it came to pass that these nations sent out a savoury report to all the neighbouring reformed churches—a report which comforted, revived, strengthened, animated, and encouraged all the true and loyal subjects of Christ's kingdom; which struck terror and amazement to the hearts of his enemies; which shook and caused to tremble the pillars of Antichrist's kingdom, and disquieted the very foundations of the *seat of the beast*; which made malignants at home and abroad to be ashamed and confounded, and even forced the haters of the Lord *to feign submission to him*. Numberless were the advantages and privileges which did redound to these nations by, and were the lovely attendants and sweet consequents of these covenants; whereby God did set to his seal of approbation, and gave clear evidence

and demonstration of his acceptance of his people's cheerful and willing adventures in this duty of covenanting with him; and as these blessings and mercies which, as the dew of Hermon, were distilled upon his people's heads and hearts, while they abode steadfast with him and faithful in his covenant, were so many irrefragable proofs of his acquiescence in their first and laudable undertakings; so the many sad and fearful plagues, distractions, confusions, and miseries, which have attended and followed the many gross breaches and violations of these covenants and departures from God, are no less evident discoveries, undeniable signs and pregnant convictions of the Lord's most just displeasure and indignation with the by-past and present courses of revolting and backsliding from him; which courses of declension and grievous apostatizing from God and his covenant, all the three kingdoms, and in special this nation and every individual therein capable of such a work, are, without all controversy, called to bewail and confess before God, and by speedy amendment to turn from them, in order to avert judgments and turn away justly impendent wrath and long threatened strokes.

The consideration of these blessings and benefits on the one hand, which followed the zealous entering into and sincere performing of these sacred oaths; and, upon the other hand, the sense we desire to retain of the plagues and curses threatened by God in his Word against covenant-breaking, inflicted upon covenant-breakers in former ages, and foreign nations, and visibly impending upon us in these nations for our perfidious dealing in God's covenant; hath moved us, a *poor, insignificant handful of people*, unworthy indeed to be called the posterity of our zealous reforming ancestors, though heartily desirous to be found adherers to the same standard of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government to which they adhered, to attempt this solemn and weighty duty of renewing (in our capacities and stations,) these covenant obligations, that we might at least give some discovery of our respect to the cause of God, for the advancement and preservation whereof these covenants were first entered into, and afterwards again and again renewed by our religious progenitors, and by the whole representative body of the three kingdoms, who had any zeal for the interest of religion. And that we might, for our parts, be in some measure instrumental to transmit a testimony for the work of God in our land to the succeeding generation. Neither do we want, beside these general motives, some special inducements to this undertaking. As, 1. Because these national covenants having been nationally broken, and their funeral piles erected by wicked and perfidious rulers in the capital cities of the kingdom with all imaginable ignominy and contempt, have long lien buried and (almost)

quite forgotten under these ashes ; most people either hating the very name and remembrance of them, or at least being ashamed honourably to avouch their adherence to them, and afraid to endeavour a vigorous and constant prosecution of the duties contained in them ;—so that it is high time that every one should do his utmost towards a reviving of them. 2. Because many openly declare their sorrow and grief that ever these covenants should have been entered into ; malignants calling them a conspiracy, attributing every miscarriage of the persons engaged in them to the covenants themselves as their native effects ; and others, who would take it ill to be called malignants, making them the causes of all the tyranny, rapine, bloodshed, and persecution of the late reigns, as having raised the spleen of the enemies of religion, and accounting it safer that they should lie still in their graves than that they should irritate malignants any more by their resurrection ;—therefore, we judge it our duty to renew them, that we might evidence, that notwithstanding all these malicious calumnies and false consequences cast upon them, we are still of the same judgment with our reformers, that they are the most sovereign means, under the blessing of God, for reviving and preserving the work of God in the land. 3. Because of the courses that are carried on in direct opposition to these covenants—the nations, formerly cemented in peace and love, in conjunction with truth and righteousness, having broken these bonds and united themselves upon another footing by the late sinful incorporating union, and imposing new oaths in opposition to the covenant—such as the abjuration, &c., granting licence, protection, and toleration to all the evils adjoined in the covenant—as heresies, and errors in doctrine, superstition in worship, Prelacy and Erastianism in government, and overthrowing all good discipline. 4. Because of our own sinful miscarriages in, and woful declinings from our covenanting duties—our proneness to break covenant with God, and to be indifferent, lax, negligent, and unsteadfast in the cause and work of God, and to be led away with the error of the wicked, and to fall from our steadfastness ; wherefore, we thought it necessary to bind ourselves by a new tie to the Lord, and one to another in a zealous prosecution of covenanted duties, that the covenant might be as a hedge to keep us from running out into the paths of destroyers. 5. We being sincerely desirous, and having an earnest longing to celebrate the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper, whereof many had unjustly called us despisers and contemners, and finding it to have been the laudable practice of the Church of Scotland formerly that all such as were admitted to that holy table should swear and subscribe the covenant before their coming thereto, we judged it a fit preparative for our receiving a sacramental confirmation of God's

covenanted love and favour to us, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that we should avouch him for our God, and testify our adherence to his cause and truth by our renewing our national covenants with him.

Upon these and the like weighty considerations, we resolved to set about this solemn and tremendous duty; and being assured that we have no sufficiency in ourselves for any such undertaking, after frequent imploring the Lord for light and direction, strength and assistance, and seeking for ourselves a right way in the performance of the duty upon days of humiliation, both in our private societies and publickly in the fields, we did condescend upon the following *acknowledgment of sins*, the more to enable us to remember our own and the land's breaches of covenant, in our solemn public confession thereof; and did draw up the following *engagement to duties*, not to superadd any new oath and obligation to the covenants, but only to adjust the articles of the covenant to the circumstances of the time, and to explain in what sense the covenant binds us against the present evils that are now prevalent in the land, and to the contrary duties. As for the covenants themselves, we made no material alteration in them, as judging it a work more proper for an assembly of divines, or representative body of church and state (had they been upright and faithful in this cause,) than for us, who, as we are called by others in contempt, must own ourselves in truth to be *but a handful of weak and most illiterate people*, and but as babes in comparison of the first framers of our covenants: only that we might make them in some measure accommodable to the present circumstances whereinto we are involved by our iniquities, we have noted some few necessary alterations upon the margin, wherein the judicious will find that we have in nothing receded from the scope and substance of the covenants, but only in the phrase;—for instance, where the covenant binds to *the defence and preservation of the king's majesty and government*—in regard we have no king nor supreme civil magistrate so qualified as God's law and the laudable laws of this realm require, to whom we might for conscience' sake subject ourselves, in a consistency with our defending the true reformed religion in all its parts and privileges: Therefore we can only bind ourselves to *defend and preserve the honour, authority, and majesty of lawful sovereigns, or supreme magistrates, having the qualifications aforesaid, when God shall be pleased to grant them to us*. Where no judicial person will say that there is any substantial alteration as to the *matter of the duty*, but only as to the object to whom the duty is to be performed; there being none such in being as can justly claim, or to whom we may with a good conscience pay such an allegiance.

Having mutually agreed concerning these prerequisites to this sacred action that the same might be orderly gone about, and might not be performed in a clandestine way, so as to preclude any upright hearted friends to the covenanted reformation from joining with us in that so necessary a duty, there was public intimation made of the design, a competent space of time before, upon a day of humiliation, and likewise upon the Lord's day immediately preceding the work.

As for the particular way and manner, method and circumstances of the work, we had not given any narrative of them, but that some, who came with an evil eye to spy our liberty, for criticising, not for joining or profiting, have in part misrepresented the same, and may further do so; therefore, to obviate all such misreports, we have thought fit to make this brief relation thereof.

Upon Wednesday, July 23d, those who had the work in design being met together, the minister began the day's work with prayer for special assistance to attain due preparation, and a suitable frame, throughout the whole solemnity: and thereafter had a prefatory discourse to the people, showing the nature of the work in general, its lawfulness, expediency, and necessity, from scripture precedents and approved examples of the people of God, adducing the 9th chapter of Ezra, Neh. Ezek. Dan. and Neh. x. 28, 29, for proof thereof; and of the day in particular, that it was a day of fasting and supplication, with preaching of the word, in order to preparation for the solemnities intended, both of renewing the covenants and celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. After which a part of the lxxviii. Psalm, from the 5th to the 12th verse being sung, Mr. John M'Niel, preacher of the gospel, had a sermon upon Jer. l. 4, and 5. "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." From which text he raised and prosecuted largely, and particularly the two following observations, as most pertinent for the work of the day; the first implicitly supposed, the other more explicitly asserted in the words; viz. 1. That, *a people in covenant with God may be forgetful of, and deal falsely in their covenant; or that covenant-takers may be covenant-breakers.* 2. That, *it is the duty of a people who have broken covenant with God to engage themselves again to the Lord by the renovation of their covenant.* Where in prosecuting the former, he showed by what gradual steps of declension a people usually come to deal falsely in God's covenant, such as, (1.) By forgetfulness,

Deut. iv. 23. There being a connexion between forgetting and forsaking, or dealing falsely in God's covenant, so the church intimates, Psal. xlv. 17, 18. "All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way." And the returning remnant of Israel being sensible of this connexion, resolve to bind themselves to the Lord *in a perpetual covenant that may not be forgotten.* (2.) By seeking shifts and arguments to elude and evade the obligation of the covenant and to defend the breaches thereof; which is after vows to make inquiry. (3.) By despising the bond of it; Ezek. xvi. 59. "Which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant." (4.) By defection to the iniquities which are sworn and engaged against in the covenant, Jer. xi. 10. "They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant, which I made with their fathers." (5.) By changing the government, laws, and ordinances sworn to be maintained in the covenant; either the government of the state, without consulting divine direction, and due inspection into the qualification of the persons set up. Hos. viii., compare the 1st and 4th verses, "They have transgressed my covenant, &c. They have set up kings, but not by me, princes and I knew it not;" that is, without consulting me to know my will, and without my approbation and consent; or the government of the church, without regard to the revealed will of God. Thus, Abijah justly chargeth Jeroboam that he had "cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites," and that he had "made priests after the manner of the nations of other lands;" but encourages himself that he and Judah had the Lord for their God, because they had not forsaken him; "and the priests which ministered unto the Lord were of the sons of Aaron." 2 Chron. xiii. 6, 10. (6.) By an entire forsaking and disowning the obligation of the covenant, Dan. xi. 30. "He—— shall have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." (7.) By a stated opposition to the covenant, and persecuting of these who adhere thereunto. Thus Elijah justly charges Israel, 1 Kings xix. 10. That they had forsaken God's covenant, because they had thrown down his altars, slain his prophets, and sought after Elijah's life. And in a use of lamentation deduced from the foresaid doctrine, he showed, that all ranks in the land had reason to mourn over their breach of covenant, in regard that some of all ranks, from the throne to the dunghil, in church and state, are, or have been guilty of dealing falsely in God's covenant, in all and every one of these diverse ways, and of

declining from it : and in regard that there has been so much ignominy and contempt cast upon these sacred covenants, not only by breaking them openly, but also avowedly disowning and disdaining their obligation, and making the adherence to them criminal ; and, which is above all, burning them by the hand of the hangman, and burying them so long in forgetfulness. This guiltiness he applied not to great persons only, but also to professors, to ministers, and particularly to ourselves, who are called dissenters from the present establishment ; pressing upon us no less than others, the absolute and indispensable necessity of being convinced of, and mourning over these, not as the sins of others only, but also as our own—we having a chief hand in the trespass ; pressing upon all present concerned in the work the duty of self-examination, and putting themselves to the trial, concerning their knowledge of the covenant obligations, both as to their nature and extent, as well as their sense of the breaches of these obligations.

In the second head of doctrine, viz., *That it is the duty of a people who have broken covenant with God, to engage themselves again to him by renovation of their covenant* ; after proving the proposition by several heads of arguments deduced—1st, From the lawfulness of entering into covenant with God, whether personal, as Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 20, 21, or economical, as Joshua and his family, Josh. xxiv. 15, or national, as God brought his people Israel under a covenant with himself, Exod. xix. 5. The consequence holding undeniably, that if it be lawful and necessary, in any of these respects, to enter into covenant with God, it must needs be also lawful and a duty to renew the same after the breach thereof. 2dly, From Scripture precedents of the people of God, who, after breaking off and declining from God's covenant, renewed the same. As for instance, the covenant made with Israel at Horeb, was renewed at the plains of Moab, Deut. xxxix. ;—by Joshua, chap. xxiv. ;—by Asa, 2 Chron. xv. 13, 14 ;—by Jehoiada, 2 Kings, xi. 17 ;—by Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 10 ;—by Josiah, 2 Kings, xxiii. 2 ;—by Ezra and Nehemiah, Ezra, x. 3 ;—Neh. ix. ult. and x. 28, 29. 3dly, From Scripture precepts, Deut. xxix. 1—“ These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.” Psalm, lxxvi. 11—“ Vow, and pay into the Lord your God.” 4thly, From Scripture promises, wherein the Lord promiseth as a blessing and mercy to his church and people, that they should renew their covenant with him, Isaiah, xix. 21, 23—25 ; Zech. ii. 11. For further opening of the proposition, these two questions were proposed and solved—*First*, Whether all persons who have broken covenant with God may be admitted to renew

the same?—*Answer*, All sorts of persons in the three kingdoms are under the obligation of the covenant, and consequently, bound to renew and keep it inviolable; but all are not in present capacity, and therefore have no actual right to enter into covenant: such as are obstinately wicked, living in error, profanity, or malignancy, have not God's call and right from him, as such, to renew a covenant with him; for, Psal. l. 16, 17—"God says to the wicked, What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?" But all such as are reformed, or reforming from all iniquity, and namely from the defections and compliances of the time; who have some suitable sense of the breaches, and competent knowledge and understanding of the duties engaged unto in the covenant, Neh. x. 28, have a right and an immediate call to the duty of renewing the covenant. 2dly, If any number of people may renew a national oath and covenant without the consent and concurrence of royal authority, or at least, without the concurrence of some chief and principal men in church and state?—*Answer*, Without the concurrence of church and state, a covenant cannot be taken or renewed nationally, speaking strictly; yet a few may publicly declare their adherence to their covenant-engagements by renewing them, not only without the consent and concurrence of authority, but against it; and there are several precedents for so doing, both before and since the established reformation. As for instance, that covenant at Edinburgh, Anno 1557; at Perth, 1559; at Stirling, the same year; another at Leith, Anno 1560; another at Ayr, 1562. And at Lanark, a small handful of the Lord's people renewed it in direct opposition to, and at Lesmahago, without the consent or concurrence of authority; which instances may be both an inducement and encouragement to us to renew, and in our mean capacity, to testify to the nation our approbation of, and adherence to these covenants.

In the prosecution of this doctrine, he had occasion also to insist upon the *reasons*, or *motives*, and *manner* of entering into covenant. The scope and argument of the reasons adduced as motives to the duty of covenanting was to this effect:—

1. The turning away of the Lord's wrath and anger from a land, or people, which covenant-breaking hath deserved, may be a motive to renewing covenant with God; this was the motive that prompted the good reforming King Hezekiah to make a covenant with the Lord, 2 Chron. xxix. 10—"Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us." And Nehemiah, with the returned captives, Neh. ix. 38—"And because of all this, we make a sure covenant."

2. Reviving and advancement in reformation, being the ordinary consequent and effect of upright covenanting with the Lord,

may be another motive and inducement thereunto; this appears both in personal and national covenanting—In personal, Psal. cxix. 106—"I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." The Psalmist's having sworn, was a very quickening consideration to excite him to the performance of his duty. In national covenanting, we always find, after the people of Israel and Judah had covenanted with the Lord, they made progress in reformation, and the land was purged of abominations and idols. Thus it was in Asa's covenant, 2 Chron. xv. 12 to 19; for there, the people having entered into a covenant with the Lord, "and sworn with all their soul, and with all their heart," the Lord was found of them; and Asa removed his mother, Maachah, from her royal dignity, and stamped the idol which she had made, and burnt it at the brook Kidron; and he brought into the house of the Lord the things that his father and himself had dedicated. Thus it was also in Jehoiada's covenant, which he made "between the Lord, and the king, and the people, that they should be the Lord's people," 2 Kings, xi. 17, 18, 20; for, immediately after the making of this covenant, "all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down--his altars, and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly; and the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord;" and they slew Athaliah with the sword. The like is evident in Hezekiah's covenanting, 2 Chron. xxix., xxx., xxxi. chapters; and in Josiah's, 2 Chron. xxxiv., xxxv. chapters.

3. This upright renewing of covenant with the Lord is a way and mean to procure many mercies, both spiritual and temporal, from the hand of the Lord; which should be a strong inducement and motive to engage us thereunto. Spiritual mercies are entailed upon it, Deut. xxix. 12, 13—"That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may establish thee to-day for a people to himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Temporal mercies are also promised to this upright renewing and keeping covenant, Deut. xxix. 9—"Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do." And, it is remarked, 2 Chron. xv. 15., that after Asa's covenant, "the Lord gave them rest round about."

4. The malice and opposition of the Popish, Prelatical, and malignant party against the covenants, and their doing what in them lies, to make their obligation void and null, may be a motive and argument for the people of God so much the more to avouch their respect to them by a public adherence, especially after long continued breaches.

5. Upright entering into, or renewing covenant with God, is a most sovereign medicine for healing a people's breaches, as well as their backslidings, the covenant being a cement, as well to join and unite the people of God one to another, as all of them in their duty to God; and, as it flows from the nature of the covenant to unite the friends of reformation, so it is observable as one of the peculiar fruits of covenant-renewing, that union in the Lord has followed thereupon: thus it was with Israel and Judah in the text, who united together in making a covenant with the Lord. Whence all the people of God, who are called to be united and "perfectly joined together in the same spirit, and in the same mind;" and especially they who have been lamentably divided one from another, by their manifold defections from God, and from their covenant-engagements, ought to be strongly inclined, moved, and engaged to this duty: from this consideration, that upright covenant-renewing is a usual mean of land-uniting and church-uniting dispositions amongst the people of God.

As for the manner of renewing covenant with God, and how the duty ought to be gone about, he propounded and opened it in the following particulars, to this effect:—

1. That it must be done with understanding and judgment, both in relation to the nature of the duties we engage to perform in the covenant; grossly ignorant persons being justly deprived of the privilege of engaging in covenant, though bound to inform themselves of its nature and obligation; and also in relation to the breaches, such as would engage into it being called to have some suitable sense and understanding, both how it has been violated, and by what means persons come to be guilty of the breach thereof. So, Neh. x. 28, 29—"Every one that had knowledge and understanding entered into the covenant."

2. This duty must be gone about with sincerity and uprightness of heart; thus Joshua, when making a covenant with the people, that they should serve the Lord, exhorts them—"Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth." Joshua, xxiv., compare the 25th verse with the 14th. The want of which qualification in covenant-renewing, causes unsteadfastness and perfidy in covenant-performing—Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37.

3. This duty of covenant-renewing requires, as a qualification towards the right performing of it, that there be a due consideration, and some suitable impression of the solemnity and weightiness of the work: which ariseth, partly from the *object* or *party covenanted with*, a holy and jealous God, Joshua, xxiv. 19—"He is a holy God, he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins," and partly from the *subject matter covenanted, or engaged to*. The articles of the covenant of grace, which we have professedly, at least, yielded to in our bap-

tism, are weighty; for therein, as God engages to give us himself, his Son Christ Jesus, and in him all temporal and eternal blessings; so we engage to be obedient children, and faithful subjects to him all the days of our lives. And the articles of these national covenants are weighty, for therein we engage to great things relating to the glory of God, and the good of our own and other's souls. And, partly, this weightiness ariseth from the great *danger and dreadful punishment of breaking the covenant*; which is threatened in many places of Scripture. The same is also intimated to us in the customs both of the Jews and Heathens, in entering into covenant; particularly, we find that the Jews used to cut a calf, or some other clean beast, in twain, and pass between the parts of it—using this, or the like form of speech, as the Jewish doctors relate—"So God divide or separate me, if I keep not this covenant." Jer. xxxiv. 18, compared with verse 20—"I will give the men into the hands of their enemies who have transgressed my covenant, which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof." Nehemiah also, chap. v. 12, 13, when he took an oath of the priests, shook his lap and said—"So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise," &c. And all the covenanters said—"Amen."

4. Much tenderness and heart-melting is requisite to the right performing of this duty. So it was with covenant-renewing Israel and Judah, who were "weeping as they went to seek the Lord their God, and to make a covenant never to be forgotten." This brokenness of heart, and tender-melting frame may arise, both from the consideration of the many sins and iniquities whereby persons have provoked the Lord their God to anger, whence they come "to be like doves of the valley, every one mourning for his iniquity:" and likewise from the consideration of the grace and mercy of God, manifested in Christ Jesus, his condescension to enter into a covenant with sinful man, and readiness, upon his people's repentance, to pardon their former breaches; from the consideration of this transcendently free grace, an humble and sincere covenanter will be transported into an ecstasy of wonder and admiration; as the church is, Mic. vii. 18, 19, 20—"Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?" &c.

5. Dependency and recumbency upon the Lord by faith, for strength to perform covenant engagements, is requisite to right covenanting, Isa. xxvii. 5—"Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." This is to "take hold of" God's covenant, Isa. lvi. 4.

6. Affection to God and the duties whereunto we engage, is

requisite to right covenanting, and that in its flower and vigour, height and supremacy. Thus, 2 Chron. xv. 12, 15, Asa and the people “entered into a covenant, to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul:—And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire.” They had an affection to the work, and did it with complacency, not in dissimulation, so as not to design to perform it: nor through compulsion, with an eye to secular profit or preferment, as many in these lands did.

7. It is necessary, in order to right covenanting, that the work be gone about with a firm purpose and resolution (through grace enabling us) to adhere to our covenant engagements, notwithstanding whatever opposition and persecution we may meet with from the world for so doing, and whatever difficulties and discouragements may arise from the multitude of those, who prove unsteadfast in, or foully forsake their covenant. We must stand to our covenant, as it is said of Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 32, that “he caused all that were present in Judah and Benjamin, to stand to” the covenant, which implies as well a firm resolution to perform, as consent to engage, as in the latter part of the verse, it is remarked, that “the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers;” where *doing according to the covenant* is exegetical of *standing to it*. David also joins the resolution of performance with swearing; Psal. cxix. 106. “I have sworn, and I will perform, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.”

From the doctrine thus confirmed and explained, he drew this inference, by way of information, that seeing it is a people’s duty, who have broken covenant with the Lord, to engage themselves again to him, by renewing their covenant, then it is not arbitrary for us (as many are apt to think) to renew, or not to renew our covenant; but that there is a plain and positive necessity for our repenting and returning again to the Lord, by entering anew into covenant with him, whether personal made in baptism, or at the Lord’s table, or under affliction and trouble, or national vows and covenants entered into by ourselves or our fathers. And in a use of lamentation, he bewailed the backwardness of these lands, and particularly of this nation, to this duty; in that, now after sixty years and upwards of great defections from, and grievous breaches of our covenants by people of all ranks; yet there appears so little sense of either the obligations or breaches of them, and of a disposition to reviving them, even amongst those who not only profess some love to the reformation of religion, but even some belief of their perpetual binding obligation; and that notwithstanding, as the Prophet Isaiah saith, concerning Judah, chap. xxiv. 5. “The

earth (or the land) is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant;" our land having been defiled with Popery and Prelacy, and with a flood of abomination and profanity, the natural consequent of perfidy, the ordinances having been changed, perverted and corrupted, and the covenant not only broken, but burnt ignominiously, and the adherence to it made criminal; yet, for all this, there has not been a time found for renewing them these twenty-three years; and that ministers, at whose door it chiefly lay to stir up the land to this work, have many of them been as careless as others, waiving and putting off a stumbled and offended people, expressing some concernedness for this duty, with these and the like pretexts, that it was not a fit time, nor the land in a case for it (too sad a truth), but not labouring to get the land brought to be in a case and disposition for it, by pressing the obligation, and plainly discovering the violations thereof; so that, instead of being brought to a fitter condition for this duty, the covenants are almost forgotten and quite out of mind, so that the succeeding generation is scarce like to know that ever there was a covenant sworn in Scotland. And more particularly, that the godly, who are dissatisfied with, and dissent from the defections and corruptions of the times, have discovered so little concern about the work of reformation, and cause of God, which the covenants oblige us to own, defend, and promote. All which laxness and remissness is for a lamentation, and ought to be lamented and mourned over by the people of God.

In the exhortation, he pressed upon us who are embodied together in societies, and were then come together to renew our *covenant-engagements*, by giving an open and public testimony of our adherence to the *covenants*, *national* and *solemn league*, that we should labour to attain a suitable frame, and serious consideration of the weightiness, solemnity, and awfulness of the work we were then undertaking: enforcing the same by several cogent motives, as namely, because in renewing these covenants we are called to remember our baptismal and personal vows, whereby we had renounced the devil, the world and the flesh, and devoted ourselves to the Lord to be his people; which if they were slighted and forgotten, there could be no right, acceptable, and comfortable entering into *national covenants*. And likewise because of the weightiness of the duties engaged to in our *national covenant*, and in the *solemn league and covenant*, which he proved to be a covenant that ought to be renewed by us in this nation no less than our *national covenant*, in regard it was a religious, just, and holy covenant made betwixt God and the three kingdoms, though it cannot now be taken in the same consideration and extent, as at the first framing it was, viz.: As

a league betwixt us and the representative body of the kingdoms of England and Ireland: where he took occasion to go over the several articles of the covenant, showing the nature and weightiness of the duties.

Beside these two more general doctrines which were chiefly insisted upon, he observed several others pertinently deducible from the words, as first, *That unfaithful dealing in God's covenant will breed distance and estrangement from God.* This is implied in the children of Israel and Judah seeking the Lord, asking the way to Sion, &c.; their asking the way to Sion, importing that they had forgotten the right way of worshipping God, and that their sins had made a sad separation between them and their God. Secondly, That it is necessary that persons become sensible of their sin against God, and of his anger against them, and lay these things to heart, that they may be concerned about reconciliation with God, and reform their lives. Thirdly, That the kindly exercise of repentance in a backsliding people lamenting after the Lord, and setting about to renew their covenant with him, hath an effectual influence to unite and cement the divided people of God: thus in the text the children of Israel and Judah, whom their iniquities had long and sadly divided, are uniting together in this desirable frame of weeping and seeking the Lord their God, and making a perpetual covenant with him. This doctrine he proved and applied briefly as the time would permit, both because of its native result from the text, and because of his own, and our sincere desire to see a holy union and communion, in the way of truth and duty effected, by returning to the Lord, and renewing the covenant with him, as among all the godly, so especially among those that profess their dissent from, and dislike of the corrupt courses of the times.

Sermon being ended, after prayer, the covenants were first read according to the *Directory for renewing the solemn league and covenant*, prescribed by the Act of the General Assembly at Edinburgh, 6th October, 1648, post meridiem, entitled, *Act for renewing of the Solemn League and Covenant*; and, thereafter, the following Acknowledgment of Sins was also read: after which, prayer was made, containing a comprehensive confession of the more general heads of the foresaid Acknowledgment of Sins; and a part of the 78th Psalm, beginning at the 36th verse, was sung; and the minister dismissed the congregation with a short reprehension and advice, reproving them for their unconcerned carriage and behaviour during the reading of the acknowledgment of the breaches of these covenants, which had been first entered into at the expense of so much blood and treasure, and confirmed and sealed with the blood of many honourable martyrs of all ranks in the land; withal, exhorting

all present to labour after a heart-melting frame for the right performance of the work in hand.

Upon Thursday, July 24th, after singing a part of the 105th Psalm, from the 6th to the 12th verse, and prayer—Mr. John M'Millan preached upon Isaiah, xlv. 5—"One shall say I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Whereupon, after the unfolding of the context, and explication of the words, showing that they clearly contain an intimation of a covenant relation betwixt God and a people, and their avouching of the same upon their part; the words seeming to have a reference to the state of the New Testament Church, and conversion of the Gentiles, who, being allured by the great gospel blessings and mercies bestowed by God upon the Jews, to join themselves to the church, should avouch their interest in the Messiah and covenant of grace, by taking the Lord for their God, and owning themselves to be his people. So that the words may be taken up as an answer to such a presupposed question as this, *Whose are you? and what is your name?* To which question, one shall answer, *I am the Lord's*; another, *I am one of old Jacob's family and offspring*; another, if you desiderate my name, look the covenant subscriptions and you will find it there; another shall say, whatever my name was before, *my surname now is an Israelite*. So sweetly should a shower of gospel grace engage the hearts of the New Testament converts to avow their covenant relation to the Lord, and glory in their union with his church and covenanted people. Having taken up the sense of the words to this effect, he deduced from them these two observations:

1. *That the Lord is graciously pleased sometimes to privilege his people with very remarkable tokens of his gracious presence.* This doctrine is clear from the context, verses 3d and 4th—"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses."

Under this head of doctrine, he gave the following marks to evidence whether the present time of renewing our covenant with God, was indeed to us a time of the Lord's privileging us with his gracious presence—1st, That a time of God's privileging his people with his gracious presence, and with a shower of gospel grace, is a very inviting and alluring time; wherein, as the Lord invites his people to their duty, by engaging their hearts and souls, through his Spirit's gracious influences, to fall in love with him and his commandments, so they mutually invite one another to covenant with God. 2d, That such a time proves a soul-engaging and taking time, wherein souls are engaged to

fall in love with the covenant, and with Christ the Mediator of the covenant, and are taken in the net of the gospel. 3d, That a time of the letting out of God's gracious presence is ordinarily a time of many sweet and excellent resolutions, the people of God resolving to walk more accurately and circumspectly in the ways of new obedience. 4th, That this usually is a time of ridding marches, and clearing of evidences. 5th, That it is a time of many and special confirmations of God's love to the soul. 6th, That this time of God's letting out much of his gracious presence to his people, is a very uniting and healing time to them amongst themselves. Having given these marks, to show whether the Lord were, at the occasion, letting out his gracious presence, he added, by way of caution, that seeing (no doubt) the people of God would be expecting something of all these, upon the undertaking of so great a work; if so be that they found it not, they should not thence be induced to have hard thoughts of the Lord, and to conclude that he keeps not his usual method with his people, or is not so good to them as formerly he hath been: for whatever defects there are upon his people's part, there is none upon the Lord's, for he remains the same to them, providing they do so to him; the change of his dispensations towards his people being from the change of his people's deportment towards him.

The Second Doctrine, resulting more directly from the words, was—*That the Lord's Spirit poured out in plenty upon his people will quickly bring them to an embracing of him, and to a public acknowledgment and avouching of the same.* Thus it was with the people of God in the text: no sooner does the Lord "pour water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," even his Spirit upon the spiritual seed of Israel, but presently they are at covenanting work, and subscribing work—"One shall say I am the Lord's, &c." In prosecuting this doctrine, he showed first, negatively, that he was not for that occasion largely to treat of the several ways that the Spirit useth to manage this work of engaging the hearts of his people to embrace Christ, and so to make a public avouchment of the same; whether he doth it by representing to their view the sweet and precious promises made in the covenant of grace, thereby sweetly alluring and drawing them with the cords of love to himself, or by holding forth to their consciences the terrors and threatenings of the law, and thereby powerfully constraining them to fly to him as the city of refuge from the face of Divine Justice pursuing them; for, seeing the Spirit is a free agent, and blows both how and where he listeth, he may engage a soul to close with Christ by either of these ways, though most usually he doth it by a conjunction and concurrence of both. Only this ought to satisfy us, that what way soever the Spirit taketh in bringing a soul

to embrace Christ upon the gospel terms, he so manageth the work, as that the end is effectually and infallibly attained.

Nor 2dly, Was he to inquire into the measure of the outpouring of the Spirit's graces and operations, which is effectual for attaining the end, this being one of the deep things of God which the Spirit alone searcheth, and therefore is not necessary for us further to know, save only that we understand so much to be needful, as may serve to empty the creature of all confidence in, or dependence upon itself, or any other creature-helps whatsoever, and bring it to rely upon Christ alone for acceptance with God; so much is necessary, and less cannot be sufficient?

Nor 3dly, Was he to handle the material differences between those who are brought really and sincerely to accept, embrace, and acknowledge the Lord for their Lord, and to avouch the same publicly, which presupposeth a mighty power of the Spirit manifested in the sweet impressions which he maketh upon the soul, moving them sweetly and readily to comply with, and yield to Christ without any longer resistance, and those who only in semblance and show profess to avouch Christ to be their Lord, and feign submission to him, not from the Spirit's effectual and saving operations, but either from carnal and external considerations, or at most from the Spirit's common motions and convictions; which differences commonly arise from the different natures, motives, manner or ends of this their acknowledging and avouching Christ for their Lord, and covenanting with him?

These things, as not so immediately proper for the work in hand, though natively involved in the doctrine, being only cleared in transition; he came in the second place more positively to insist upon and handle the following heads:—First, More generally to propose some considerations which make such a great work as renewing covenant with the Lord, a weighty, hard, and difficult work. And upon the other hand to lay down some counterbalancing considerations, which render such a work more easy and light, and may afford matter of encouragement towards the undertaking of it. Secondly, More particularly in application to ourselves and the work in hand, to lay before those who were resolved to enter into covenant with the Lord what were the things that seemed to speak against us in the work, and might prove matter of discouragement in the undertaking of it. And what, upon the other side, might seem to speak for us, and be ground of encouragement to us to go forward in humble and sincere endeavours to renew our covenant with the Lord. Thirdly, To give some advices and directions to such as were resolved upon the work. As for the first; The considerations which make covenanting work weighty and difficult—

The *first* consideration was drawn from the greatness of the party to be covenanted with, the great and glorious Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who is a holy and jealous God, and who will not forgive the iniquity of such as are false-hearted and perfidious in his covenant, obstinately persisting in their false dealing; so Joshua premonisheth a people making very fair resolutions and promises to serve the Lord, that it was a harder work than at the first sight they apprehended; That they could not serve the Lord, in regard he is an holy God, he is a jealous God, and would not forgive their transgressions nor their sins; and that if they should forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he would turn and do them hurt and consume them, after he had done them good, Josh. xxiv. 19, 20. It is a part of his name, Exod. xxxiv. 7. *That he will by no means clear the (obstinately and impenitently) guilty.*

A *second* consideration that makes the work of covenanting with God to appear a hard and difficult work, was taken from the nature of the work itself, which is to serve the Lord in a covenant way, and in the capacity of covenanted children, this covenant relation involving it in a walk and conversation in all things like the chosen of the Lord; and 'tis no small matter, so to walk, and so to behave as to be accounted worthy of a covenanted union with the Lord and interest in him, this covenant relation being confirmed with such awful sanctions, as in scripture we find, Neh. x. 29. "They ——— entered into a curse and into an oath, to walk in God's law," &c. This consideration, that covenanting work is weighty in its own nature, was further illustrated and amplified from the difficulty both of things to be engaged against, and of the things to be engaged unto; as for the former, the things to be engaged against, which is sin in all its kinds and degrees, and in all the inducements to it, both with reference to ourselves, and also as to participation in the sins of others. This must first be put away, if one would be a right covenanter. Well did old Jacob understand the necessity of this, who being resolved to go up to Bethel, to renew his covenant with God, that answered him in the day of his strait, advises his family first "to put away the strange gods that were amongst them, and to be clean." Gen. xxxv. 2. So David assures us, Psal. xxxiv. 14, that departing from evil must precede doing of good. A man that would lift up his face without spot in renewing covenant with God, must first "put iniquity far away, and not suffer wickedness to dwell in his tabernacles," as Zophar advises Job, chap. xi. 14, 15. They that would take on with a new master must be fairly parted from the old, there is no way of pleasing both Christ and mammon, and therefore no possibility of serving both; whence

the nature of covenanting work requires, that there be an upright putting away of all sin; for if the soul have any secret reserves in favour of a beloved sin, it has no grounds to think that Christ will accept it, as his covenanted spouse and bride. Nor is this all, but 2dly, it must be mourned over and truly bewailed, especially upon the account of the offence done to a gracious God thereby; which sorrow must not be of an ordinary sort, but an extraordinary and most intense sorrow, for it cannot be an ordinary kind of sorrow, provided it be in any suitable measure proportioned to the offence. And 3dly, which follows upon the former, there must be a loathing of the person's self, because of these its ways and doings that have not been good in his sight, Ezek. vi. 9, even to that degree as to fill the soul with wonder and astonishment, that ever it should have an occasion of renewing covenant with God again. 4thly, There must be a sincere and hearty resolving against all these sins, consequent upon this loathing; the soul saying with a steady purpose, "if I have done iniquity I will do no more," Job xxxiv. 32.

2dly, As to the latter, the things engaged unto render the nature of covenanting work difficult and weighty, which are duties of various kinds, such as, 1st, Holiness towards God, which is one special and chief part of the covenant, and that not for a time only, but for ever; both in regard that God, the party covenanted with, is holy and unchangeably so, and calls his people to imitate him in this attribute especially; and also in regard that the covenant itself is in its nature holy, all the articles being morally good and consonant to the royal law, the scriptures of truth; and in the extent of its duration, of perpetual force and obligation. This duty of holiness towards God, engaged to in the covenant, comprehends in it a zealous endeavour to maintain the purity of the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of his institution, in opposition to all these who would corrupt it, or decline from it. 2d, Righteousness towards our neighbour, and more especially to our covenanted brother; which righteousness should discover itself both in reference to sin and duty, by reproving him for sin; or upon his rejecting reproof, by withdrawing from him, that he may be ashamed, and so come to be reclaimed from his evil course; and by affording him all that help and assistance to covenanted duties that may be warrantably called for, and generally by uprightness towards him in our transactions and dealings of any kind. 3d, Faithfulness towards our nation, which comprehends a constant endeavour to advance and promote in our station the common good thereof; and a steadfast opposition to the courses that tend to take away the privileges of the same. 4th, Uprightness towards ourselves, in every thing relating to the real

good of our own souls and bodies ; by walking in all the duties of sobriety, temperance, and moderation ; for as others are to have their due, so ourselves are not to be neglected.

A *third* consideration, whereby the duty of renewing covenant with God appears to be difficult and weighty, was deduced from *the manner and way of engaging* ; whereunto several things of great difficulty to be attained, were showed to be absolutely necessary, as 1st, *Judgment*, to know, and in some measure comprehend, the nature of the duties to be engaged to, and the advantages flowing from the right entering into, and keeping of the covenant, and the losses redounding to the breakers thereof. 2d, *Seriousness*, which, if ever it be in exercise, will certainly then be most lively, when the soul is entering upon a work of so high import, as making a covenant with God ; for then the creature has one of two things to look for, either covenant blessings, or covenant curses, according as it performs the tenor of the covenant. 3d, *Deliberation* ; rashness in covenanting is of dangerous consequence : 'tis not the example of others only. nor raw flashes of conviction or love, nor external considerations, as gain, honour, men's approbation, &c., that must induce to this duty ; but a fixed permanent purpose of heart and soul, rationally and deliberately entered into. 4th, *Heart-integrity*, That it be done with all the heart, 2 Chron. xv. 15, for the man brings himself under a curse, that "having a male in his flock, sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing." Mal. i. 14.

A *fourth* consideration, from whence the work of covenanting comes to be a difficult and hard work, was deduced from *the way and manner of performing* the duties engaged to ; which is (as 'tis expressed in the covenant) with sincerity, reality, and consistency ; the difficulty of attaining to these qualifications in the performance of covenant-duties, arising partly from the strength of corruption within, the law of sin and death, which opposes the law of God ; and partly from the strength of snares and temptations from without ; which requires, that (as becomes covenanted children) there be a daily recourse to Jesus Christ, for light to discover, and strength to overcome these corruptions and temptations ; and life, that the soul turn not dead and insensible under them.

A *fifth* consideration, from whence the difficulty of covenanting with God is sometimes heightened, was taken from *the meanness of such as attempt the work*. When the great ones, the nobles that are called *the shields of the earth*, do not afford their authority and patrociny, as an encouragement to the undertaking ; and when the wise and learned will not employ their learning, parts, and abilities for the facilitating thereof, but the mean and weakest are left to do the work alone. This was no small difficulty and discouragement to the Tekoites, in their

building and repairing the wall of Jerusalem, that "their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord." Neh. iii. 5.

A *sixth* consideration, which may sometimes render such a work hard and difficult, was drawn from *the want of the concurrence of civil authority; and the opposition made thereunto by the laws of the land*, which, when it happens to be the case of a people designing to renew national engagements, cannot but be a very difficult and discouraging ingredient amongst others in their cup.

On the other hand, these counterbalancing considerations were adduced, which are as so many props and pillars to support his people, and to allay the difficulties of the duty of entering into covenant with God, and to make it the more light and easy. 1st, *That the work is the Lord's*, and he is greatly concerned in it; and, therefore, his people may safely lean to him for help, he having enacted no law against it, as men have. 2d, *That he looks not upon his people in such undertakings, as in themselves*, for then it were impossible for creatures having the least sinful imperfection in them, to covenant with their spotless Creator, and come so near a jealous God, who is a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity; *but he considers his people in their covenanting with him, as in their head Christ, his eternal Son*; whence, we may safely say, that our national covenant wants not a Mediator more than the covenant of grace, in this sense, as it is through him we have access to make this covenant with God. 3d, *That the Lord has promised his presence to his own work*; thus we find, through the whole of the covenants made and renewed by the people of Israel and Judah, that the Lord discovered his gracious presence with them, by some remarkable effect of his goodness. Thus it is remarked of Hezekiah, that after he had entered into covenant, "the Lord was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth," 2 Kings, xviii. 7, compared with 2 Chron. xxix. 10. 4th, *That the Lord puts none of his people to any piece of his work upon their own proper expense and charges, but upon his own*; and, whatever complaints his people may have of want of necessary charges, he both has wherewith to supply them, and has undertaken to make it actually forthcoming for them, having commanded his people to open their mouths wide, and he has promised to fill them. 5th, *That the covenant hath a greater entail of blessings than will sufficiently compensate whatever expense and pains a people may be at, in undertaking and performing it*. In regard, that though a Christian should lose all, yea, even life itself, upon the account of it, yet the covenant will bring in all with advantage to a hundred fold, and glory to the overplus, when it is duly observed. 6th, *That the undertakers have God's*

call and commandment to set about it; this is that which, above all other considerations, inspires a Christian with undaunted courage and alacrity in the undertaking of a duty, when it is made clear that the person has God's call and command for a warrant; otherwise, the want of this may make the duty to be heartlessly and doubtingly entered upon, and lamely performed.

Seeing, therefore, that sometimes a work may be the Lord's, and yet the Lord's call to such a particular person or people to undertake it, may be wanting: he came necessarily (which was the *second* head proposed) to inquire, what were the several things that might seem to speak against us, as not having this call from the Lord, and what were the things that spake for us, and might give us matter of encouragement in undertaking the work before us. In solution of which, the following considerations were proposed:—

1st, As to the things that might seem to speak against us—1st, *Our darkness*, not whether covenanting be a duty, but in regard of the want of right apprehensions of the nature and greatness of the duty, which cannot be a sufficient ground to neglect the duty unless there were some duties from which a Christian is exeemed, and that is one of them, which indeed will not be found in the whole Bible. 2d, *Our want of a frame suitable for the greatness and weightiness of the work*, which speaks sadly against us, but is not to be a ground to neglect the duty, we being commanded to look to the God of the covenant for it.

Upon the other hand, the things which seemed to speak for us, and yield matter of encouragement, that not only the work was the Lord's, but also that we had his call to the same, were, 1st, The many palpable, plain, and open breaches of these covenants, are a loud call to renew them. 2d, The undervaluing account that the nations have made of them is a call to all such as have any respect to the sacred name of the Lord invoked in these covenants, to do their utmost to vindicate them from that disgrace, by showing how high a price and value they put upon them. 3d, The lands enacting the perpetual banishment of these covenants, and imposing oaths contrary and opposite to them—which brings double perjury upon the nation, both by disregarding and omitting the performance of this just, lawful, and commendable covenant, and by making unjust, sinful, and hateful covenants for opposing the growth and success of Christ's kingdom, even the reformation of these many abuses that have corrupted the holy religion of his institution: and perjury drawing wrath after it, as a native and necessary fruit and consequent; they that would stand in the gap to turn away national wrath, cannot otherwise make up the hedge, that the land should not be destroyed, but by renewing and keeping national covenants. 4th, That so many are speaking against them everywhere, ac-

counting them a conspiracy against royal authority, a popular combination for advancing private ends and interests under the cloak of religion, or at least unnecessary and unprofitable for the end intended by them, binding to things of such a heterogeneous nature, as renders the keeping within the sphere of our own activity and station inconsistent and impossible, and such things as whereof we have no occasion, and the like; which is a loud call to us or any that retain other thoughts of their nature and ends, than the generality do, to speak for them, which cannot be done more fitly, honourably, or conspicuously any other way than by renewing and observing them. 5th, The practice of the godly in such a juncture of time as what ours appears to be, is a call and encouraging consideration to set us upon this work—the godly usually in times of great defection from the purity and power of religion and corruption of the ordinances of God's worship, set about renewing their covenant thereby to prevent covenant curses, and procure covenant blessings: as we find both in Scripture record, 2 Chron. xv. 12, 13; xxix. 10; xxxiv. 30, 31; Ezra, x. 3, and in our own ecclesiastic history. And the practice was justified by the success for the most part terminating in some reviving and reformation. 6th, The time being come to such a crisis, that such as would keep the word of Christ's patience cannot any longer do it in a distinguishing way from those that are covenant-breakers, but by renewing covenant and thereby making a test and trial of the well-wishers to the covenanted interest in the land is a call to set about this work; in former times, the godly held fast this their profession by suffering for their adherence to covenanted duties, resisting unto blood, striving against the sin of covenant-breaking: whereas now, our call seems to be more clear to do it by renewing these covenant-obligations. 7th, The covenants themselves have, as it were, a loud voice to call us and all who own their obligation to set about renewing of them; they call by the justness and intrinsic goodness of the matter, which is of binding force by virtue of the law of God prior to any covenant-tie, and by the holiness and excellency of the end: to wit, the reformation and preservation of religion;—yea, the covenant seems to say to us and to every true hearted son of the Church of Scotland, as Job says in another case—"Have pity upon me, O my friends," &c. So says the covenant—have pity upon me, all ye that have any respect for me, for church and state have forsaken me.

The *third* thing proposed was, to give some advices and directions for right managing the duty intended. The scope and substance whereof briefly follow:—

1st, Such as would make a covenant with God aright, so as the same may never be broken nor yet forgotten, must labour to know if they be in good terms with the God of the covenant,

and with the Mediator of the covenant; if they have sincerely closed with the terms, and acquiesced in the proposals of the covenant of grace: this personal and particular acceptance of Christ in the new covenant being the only fountain of acceptable entering into national covenants. Hence, it concerns all that would be right Covenanters to search and see how it may be betwixt God and them, because it is but a profanation of the covenant to have the hand and tongue at it and the heart from it; a well-informed head without a reformed heart is not sufficient—a good opinion and liking of the covenant without a heart and affection to the covenant avails nothing in God's sight.

2d, Such as would rightly renew covenant with God must be well resolved concerning the motives leading them to covenant, which motives must neither arise wholly from without nor yet wholly from within; for, if these motives arise wholly from without, it discovers a great deal of treachery in the persons covenanting, as not beginning at the heart, not duly considering the inward case of the soul, but being moved from some external considerations—as a name amongst men, or affectation of zeal for public concerns, or such like; if they arise wholly from within, it betrays much weakness and lowness of spirit, as not being able at the same time both to have a concern about the inward frame of the heart and eternal estate and condition of the soul, and likewise a zeal for the public good of the nation and thriving of the work of God and kingdom of Christ. Both which interests ought to be in their due proportion before the eyes of a sound and real Covenanter; a right engager in covenant must be moved thereto, both from a due sense of the strength and power of corruption within, and also from the consideration of the lowness of God's work through defection without.

3d, A right Covenanter must be well resolved concerning the terms of the covenant; that it excludes all coming and going, according to the revolutions of the times and the ebbing and flowing of worldly interests. One that has given up his name to the Lord in covenant, and called himself by the name of Israel, must not, like the Samaritans, be an Israelite only in a time of Israel's prosperity, but he must be one in adversity too; the things engaged to in the covenant being of everlasting and permanent duration in their nature, must be lasting also in their observation.

4th, A right renewer of covenant must be well resolved anent the cost and expense of steadfast keeping of covenant; this should be first counted and deliberately resolved upon before engaging, lest, after persons have engaged, they want sufficiency to finish and fulfil the undertaking: and the Wise man assures us—it is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay. The covenant may come to require the cost both of doing and suffer-

ing to finish it, there must therefore be a resolving upon both before engaging.

5th, A right Covenanter must be well resolved concerning the separating nature, and the uniting tie and bond of the covenant; for, as it distinguisheth between friends and foes, so it unites Covenanters amongst themselves in duties, interests, and concerns—so that they become one society, having an identity of common duties and privileges, common crosses and rejoicings; and must rejoice together and weep together.

He closed the Sermon with a twofold advice or exhortation to two sorts of persons:—

1st, To those who had some good opinion of, and some love for the covenant, but yet were not resolved to join in covenant with us, because of many entanglements in a world; some estate, farm, or place of employment would be forfeited thereby; and hence, though the covenant be, in their opinion, a lawful and commendable engagement, yet not for them; they are in a course inconsistent with it, and could not be otherwise without foregoing some worldly accommodation. Those he advised to consider the matter duly; not to engage without a resolution to forsake all interests that might interfere with covenanted duties; for to engage in the covenant, and yet to walk in a course opposite to it, would be exceedingly sinful; but to labour rather after old Jacob's spirit and disposition, who looked to and trusted in the God of the covenant when he had nothing else to look to—no outward encouragement, Gen. xxxii. 10—He had but his staff in his hand when he passed over Jordan, and the Lord made him to return with two bands. For, if a person could attain Jacob's spirit, name and surname would be lovely in their eyes, covenant and covenanting.

2dly, To those who had put their hands to many sinful covenants in opposition to this covenant, and such as being in a natural and unrenewed state, in league with sin and Satan, and in covenant with hell and death. Those he advised and earnestly obtested to break all their sinful covenants, to loathe and abhor them, and be humbled for them: and to come and fall in with this covenant, to say in sincerity that whereas other lords have had too long dominion over them, henceforth they would make mention only of the name of the Lord as their Lord; and that their name should thenceforth be *Jacob*, and their surname *Israel*, and to sign and seal the same with their oath and subscription. This exhortation he enforced by the several calls to the work mentioned before, and by the two following motives: 1st, Because right entering into, and steadfast keeping of this covenant is the way to a holy life, and a holy life tends to make a holy nation; for, if we would observe this covenant sincerely, uniformly, and constantly, we could never

be an unholy, and consequently, never an unhappy people ; but it should be written as a motto upon our walls and gates, JEHOVAH SHAMMAI, *the Lord is there.* 2d, Because the entering rightly into and due observance of this covenant would be our strength in the midst of all perplexing thoughts, whether arising from inward corruptions, or from outward temptations or dangers ; the covenant yielded more satisfaction to David when dying than a royal diadem, a melodious harp, a puissant army, strong cities, a numerous offspring, or any earthly comforts could do, when, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, he supports himself with this, That “ though his house was not so with God,” yet He had made with him “ an everlasting covenant, well-ordered in all things, and sure.” The keeping of this covenant had been to our nation a Samson’s lock, whereby we should have been able to oppose all our enemies ; whereas the breach of it hath opened a door to all sorts of enemies to creep in amongst us, and hence is verified that which the Lord has threatened his people with for their breach of covenant, Deut. xxviii. 44, that the enemy shall be the head, and his people the tail.

Sermon being closed by prayer, the Acknowledgment of Sins was again read, as preparative to the engaging part ; and the minister, in the first place, admonished all such as were guilty of such public steps of defection as are confessed in the Acknowledgment, to make full and free confession thereof before the congregation with such a due sense of, and sorrow for these public sins, as might evidence a hearty design of abandoning them and of adhering more closely to covenanted duties, which accordingly many did, both with respect to the perjurious oaths of the late times and defections of the present.

Because many have made a handle of this, above any other part of the action, to reproach and render the whole of the work contemptible, calling it Jesuitic superstition, enthusiasm, advancing our own confessions into the room of Christ’s satisfaction, and expecting pardon upon the score of superficial public acknowledgments :—therefore, to vindicate this part of the work from such groundless calumny, we desire it may be adverted. 1st, That this is a commanded duty, that such as have violated the law and commandments of God, and been guilty of false and unfaithful dealing in his covenant, should unfeignedly confess their iniquity, which, if they do, God is faithful and just to forgive. 2d, That according to the nature of the offence, as the same has been acted secretly or publickly, and is of a secret or public nature and concern, so it ought to be confessed. If the offence be in its nature and way of perpetration a secret sin, known only to God and the person’s own conscience, secret repentance sufficeth : nor can the church require any thing else, in regard such sins come not within the sphere of her cognizance ;—but if the

sin be public and national, or only personal, but publickly acted, so as the same has been stumbling, scandalous, and offensive to others: then it is requisite, for the glory of God and good of offended brethren, that the acknowledgment be equally public as the offence. These are *first principles* that will not need to be proved, but may be taken for granted. But, 3dly, To make it appear that it is consonant to the practice of the godly to make public confession of national backslidings, we shall advance two or three Scripture instances. Joshua, chap. vii. 19, compared with verse 11, commands Achan, who had broken God's covenant which he commanded Israel, and so brought upon that whole nation the Lord's anger, that he would give glory to God, by making confession to him. Whence it appears, that such sins as are national in their consequences, and bring national judgments upon a people, ought to be publickly confessed for turning away these judgments, and vindicating the honour of the Supreme Lawgiver, Ezra, x. 1, 2—"Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping, and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men, women, and children: for the people wept very sore. Verse 2d, And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land. Verse 3d, Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God, to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them. Verse 10, And Ezra the priest stood up and said unto them, Ye have transgressed and taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Verse 11, Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure. Verse 12, Then all the congregation answered, and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do." Neh. ix. 1—"Now, in the twenty and fourth day of this month, the children of Israel were assembled with fasting and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. Verse 2d, And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. Verse 3d, And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God, one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confessed and worshipped the Lord their God." Acts, xix. 18—"And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds."

These Scripture examples, as we conceive, do sufficiently evince that such public confession, for the substance of it, is not only expedient, but also necessary for such as would renew their covenant with God. As for some circumstances of the manner thereof, neither are we to vindicate them, nor can they justly be

charged upon the whole of those who made those confessions, far less upon the minister who, though he exhorted such as were guilty of scandalous defections to glorify God by a public confession, yet obliged none thereunto *authoritatively*; and such as confessed the sin of their thoughts, or any other sins not scandalous and offensive to others, he exhorted to be serious in mourning over these things secretly before the Lord; but withal told them that these things are not the subject matter of such a public acknowledgment. Such as were unconcerned in their confessions, and seemed rather to do it from the example of others than from a real and deep sense of their guiltiness before God (as it must not be dissembled there were too many,) he exhorted to attain a sense of the things confessed, and posed their consciences whether they were convinced of what they pretended to confess. If any were so ignorant and weak in their apprehensions of the nature of right repentance and justification as to put their acknowledgment of sin in the room of Christ's satisfaction, and to rely thereupon for peace and acceptance with God, as it is alleged they did, it must be owned that they wofully erred in a matter of the highest consequence; but to affix this either upon all in general, or upon any particular person by name, is against the law of charity, and a judging of the heart, which is not obvious to man, but only to God, and so a usurping of God's prerogative; wherefore it appears, that the objecting of these and other such like things against this duty, is the effect of an impotent malice and passion against the whole design of the work, which is too shrewd an evidence of a malignant spirit.

Whereas, some have taken occasion to pass injurious reflections upon the minister because he made confession and acknowledgment of his own personal miscarriages; as though he did it with design to please the people and to excite them to make confession of the things whereof they had no due sense, and that he should have proposed himself as an example to the people; therefore, to discover the falsehood of such reports, we must declare plain matter of fact upon this head. The minister did indeed acknowledge his own iniquities, in general with others, and also particularly at the entry of the work, but without any design to please party or person; but only for the glory of God, as himself declared; which, if any shall say was but hypocritical self-seeking, we must remit them to the apostle's interrogation to prepare an answer—*Who art thou, O man, that judgest?* Neither did he say that he did it to be an example to others, though even in that case he had not been to be blamed, seeing the best of God's saints in public employment in church and state have done the like in public assemblies, as Josiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, in sacred record; and in our church history, the Rev. Mr. John Davidson, who, at the renewing of the covenant,

March 30th, 1596, not only exhorted the brethren of the ministry to a serious confession of their sins, but did also make confession of his own and excited the rest by his example, as is related by Mr. Calderwood in his history of the Church of Scotland, page 317. Wherefore, seeing he has the command of God and the example of the most eminent of his saints for his warrant and precedent, he may be perfectly unconcerned what are the constructions that such persons as are indifferent either about national sins or judgments do put upon this action.

The Acknowledgment of Sins being read, the minister prayed, confessing therein the sins which had been publickly confessed in the said Acknowledgment, and begging assistance to know and do the duties engaged unto; then the Engagement to Duties was likewise read in the audience of the congregation: where he showed that the design of these engagements was to accommodate the covenants to our case and circumstances. And advised the mixed multitude to beware of entering into the covenant unless they were duly resolved concerning the performing of the same, according as our fathers understood it, and as the same was explained and applied to the present condition of things in these engagements; after which, the minister having prayed for the gracious presence and assistance of the Divine Spirit to enable us both to engage and perform, commanding those who were to renew their covenant to stand upright and hold up their right hands, he proceeded to the administration of the oath, causing the people to elevate their hands at the end of each article. The covenants being renewed, the minister addressed himself to those that had entered into covenant to this purpose: Now, you who have renewed your covenant with God must not imagine that you may sit down upon your performance and rest yourselves as though your work were perfected and finished; nay, but you must consider with yourselves that now it is but beginning; your race is before you, the greatest part of the work is before your hand—covenanting is relative to performing; you must therefore meditate upon, and ponder your engagements more now than before; for now you have put a new bond upon your souls, to walk with God in all the ways of new obedience. In order therefore to your performing, as you have undertaken, I would put you in mind of several particulars which you must have much and frequently upon your hearts and before your eyes.

1st, You must know that a holy life is what becomes Covenanters; it is not holiness in name, show, and appearance, but holiness in reality, in truth and substance, that must be interwoven with all your actions and duties; though others should not look to conscience, yet you must; though others slight and neglect religion, you must by no means do it; you must put on

a Joshua's generous and holy resolution, 'That whatever others do, you and your house will serve the Lord.' You must consider upon it, that well-set speeches concerning the covenant is not what you are principally to study, but well-set hearts; you must shake off laziness as well as hypocrisy.

2d, You must be very regular in your walk; a uniform conversation in the way of holiness is that which greatly adorns a Christian, and consequently a Covenanter. And if you endeavour such a regular course of life, you will not shape yourselves according to the company you fall into. As some have a religion for every company, so they have one for man and another for God, and will be more careful and afraid lest their hypocrisy be discovered by men, than they are afraid to be made manifest to the Lord. But so it must not be with you who have renewed your covenant with the Lord; you must be the same in the closet as in the public assembly, and have a greater regard to the eye of Jehovah, and the answer of a good conscience, than to the approbation of fellow-creatures.

3d, You must be careful to perform all things which you have engaged to, within your sphere and station, but must not go without it: God is *a God of order*, and as he hath placed the stars in their proper orbs for the order and ornament of the universe, so hath he assigned to Christians their diverse stations, for the beauty, order, and union of the Church; Christ, the Captain of salvation, hath marshalled his soldiers into rank and file, and it were a disordering of his army if any should break their ranks.

4th, You must slight no opportunity of pursuing the ends of your covenants; whatever it may cost you when the occasion offers, suffering must not deter you from it; and if the times be such now as spare both your persons and purses, yet you must not be sparing in your prayers for the reviving of the work of God in the land, which is the very end of covenanting.

5th, You must be careful that you do not forget the covenant; forgetting (as you heard before) is a step towards forsaking, and, therefore, you must endeavour to have the covenant nearer to you than the Israelites had it—they had it written upon the posts of their doors, you must have it written upon the tables of your hearts.

6th, You must evidence a great deal of cheerfulness and patience under your crosses and losses, which may occur to you for your adherence to this your covenant; you must neither weaken your own hands in the discharge of covenanted duties, by drooping and discouragement under these crosses, nor stumble others, by repining at these losses, or by any carriage and deportment under them that may import your repenting of

what you have now done. And because you are impotent and weak in yourselves, therefore,

7th, You must see that faith be in exercise in all your performances of covenanted duties. If this be wanting you will perform nothing to purpose, "for without faith it is impossible to please God." By this grace you must keep up acquaintance with Christ, and have frequent recourse to him, both for cleansing you from your defilements when you break the covenant, and for strength to perform what you are obliged to by covenant, both for recovering grace to raise you up when fallen, and for preventing grace to preserve you from falling or relapsing again.

8th, That you may be the more active and vigilant in keeping covenant, you must labour to maintain a constant fear of breaking it, and have a fixed impression of the tremendous threatenings denounced against covenant-breakers; and you must know that all are such in God's account; ~~who~~ satisfy themselves with the form of godliness, denying the power thereof. For this end read and ponder these and the like scriptures:—

Lev. xxvi. 25. "And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant, and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you: and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy." Neh. v. 13 ——— "So God shall shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out and emptied." Jer. xi. 3. "Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth from the iron furnace."

Ezek. xvii. 15. "Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such things? or shall he break the covenant and be delivered?" Verse 18th, "Seeing he hath despised the oath, by breaking the covenant, when lo, he had given his hand, and hath done all these things: he shall not escape." Verse 19th, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, as I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head."

The minister having given these exhortations, closed the day's work with prayer, and singing a part of the ciii. Psalm, from the 17th verse to the 19th. And having intimated the time of meeting for more immediate preparation for the *Holy communion*, putting the people in mind to be preparing for the work by fervent prayer and supplication, joined with serious and upright self-examination, he dismissed the congregation after the usual form.

This true and unbiassed account of the work in its design, progress, and issue, we have given, not to pre-occupy false re-

ports only, which we cannot rationally suppose an entire freedom from, unless we will fall in with the opposers of our covenanted reformation, and to purchase the good opinion and commendation of men at the rate of losing the favour of God. The main end of relating some of the more material heads, scope, and argument of the *sermons*, is, because there are some things handled in them which behoved to have been inserted in this *preface*, to clear up our motives and call to the work, which could not be better done, than as the same was cleared then to the people. And this brief relation, though falling short of the matter then delivered, may serve to bring things to the memories of those that found sweet satisfaction in hearing them in the public. As for what may be the observations of censorious critics, either *of the sermons* in particular, or of the *work* in general, we are perfectly unconcerned about them, seeing we equally value their approbation or disapprobation; providing true matter of fact be not misrepresented, and so truth injuriously wronged. Nor are we willing here to make any observations of our own concerning the issue and on-carrying of the work, though all the godly there present ought to serve the Lord's gracious assistance and favour, (so far as they found the same afforded to themselves, or displayed in others) lest we may either be in danger to diminish the grace of God by complaining, or incur the suspicion of self-flatterers by commending, but shall leave it to the judgment of such as were then present, and the candid interpretation of others that may read this preceding account thereof.

There have been many objections made against the *design*, *matter*, and *form* of the *covenants*; more against subjects covenanting to defend the purity and promote the reformation of religion, without the royal concurrence of their sovereign princes, most of all against private persons entering into covenant or renewing thereof for the said end, without the general concurrence of the representative body of the Church and State. Those, which concern the former two, have been fully answered by the greatest of our reformers, whose piety and learning set them sufficiently above the snarling censures of whatsoever cavilling pens or tongues: As for what are made against the last, they are also answered better than we can pretend to do, in the analysis upon the xxixth chapter of Deuteronomy, prefixed to the National and Solemn League and Covenant, renewed at Lesmahago, whereunto we refer the reader. Only because that book may not be at hand to every one that would desire these objections solved, we shall here transcribe the answers to two or three of the most material of those objections, making but small (if any) variation from the author's words.

Object. 1. "In all the national covenants whereof we read in Scripture, there was still the concurrence of either the sovereign authority then in being, or at least of the captains, elders, officers, and heads of the tribes; and, therefore, it cannot be done by private subjects, without either royal or parliamentary authority."

Ans. Certainly the obligation of the covenant held forth, Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12, being so extensive as to reach all the members of church and commonwealth, of all qualities, ranks, vocations, ages, sexes, is to be understood *positively* that all these are obliged to enter into covenant, but not *negatively*, that without any of these the covenant should not be entered into. The motives mentioned are to the small as well as the great; and, without them, as well as with them, the articles of it, and the keeping and doing of them, are common to both alike. The relation that the small and meaner sort of people have to God (the other contracting party) is the same that the nobles and great ones have, and the privileges of it, to be established as a people unto himself, and to have him for their God, do no more belong to the one than to the other; and, consequently, the small may renew it as well as the great, but not nationally to bind the whole nation formally, to which, indeed, the concurrence of the representatives is necessary. As for precedents of this practice, see them above, in the narrative of the sermons, [p. 9.]

Object. 2. "This covenant having been disclaimed by the political father, and made void by law, never again revived by authority of parliament, nor the law rescinded by which it was declared not obligatory, is therefore of no binding force upon us who have never personally sworn it; and to renew it, and bring ourselves under the bond of it when we are free, without the concurring or imposing authority of our rulers, is high presumption in private subjects."

Ans. If any engagements can be supposed binding upon posterity, certainly national covenants to keep the commandments of God, and to adhere to his institutions, must be of that nature. It cannot be denied that several obligations do bind posterity, such as public promises with annexation of curses to the breakers, Neh. v. 12, 13. Thus, Joshua's adjuration did oblige all posterity never to build Jericho, Josh. vi. 26; and the breach of it did bring the curse upon Hiel the Bethelite, in the days of Ahab. 2dly, Public vows—Jacob's vow, Gen. xxviii. 21, did oblige all his posterity, virtually comprehended in him, Hos. xii. 4. The Rechabites found themselves obliged to observe the vow of their forefather Jonadab, Jer. xxxv. 6, 14, for which they were rewarded and commended. Public oaths do oblige posterity—Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel to carry up his bones

to Canaan, Gen. i. 25, which did oblige posterity some hundred years after; Exod. xiii. 19, Josh. xxiv. 32. National covenants with men before God do oblige posterity, as Israel's covenant with the Gibeonites, Josh. ix. 15, 19; the breach whereof was punished in the days of David, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. Especially national covenants with God before men, about things moral and objectively obliging, are perpetual, and yet more especially (as Grotius observes) when they are of an hereditary nature, i. e., when the subject is permanent, the matter moral, the end good: and, in the *form*, there is a clause expressing their perpetuity.

All which ingredients of perpetual obligations are clear in Scotland's covenants, which are *national promises*, adjuring all ranks of persons, under a curse, to preserve and promote reformation according to the Word of God, and extirpate the opposite thereof; *national vows*, devoting the then engaging and succeeding generations to be the Lord's people, and walk in his ways; *national oaths*, solemnly sworn by all ranks never to admit of innovations or submit to usurpations, contradictory to the Word of God; *national covenants*, wherein the king, parliament, and people, did covenant with each other, to perform their respective duties in their several places and stations, inviolably to preserve religion and liberty; yea more, *national laws*, solemnly ratified by king and parliament, and made the foundation of the people's compact with the king at his inauguration; and finally, they are *national covenants with God*, as a party contracting to keep all the words of his covenant. The subject or parties contracting are permanent—to wit, the unchangeable God and the kingdom of Scotland, (the same may be said of England and Ireland) which, whilst it remains a kingdom, is still under the obligation of these covenants. The *matter* is *moral*, antecedently and eternally binding, albeit there had been no formal covenant—the *ends* of them perpetually good: to wit, *the defence of the true reformed religion, and the maintenance of the King's Majesty's person and estate*, (as is expressed in the National Covenant,) *the glory of God, the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ—the honour and happiness of the King's Majesty and his posterity, and the public liberty, safety, and peace of the kingdoms*, as it is expressed in the Solemn League. And in the *form* of them there are clauses expressing their perpetuity. In the National Covenant it is said, *that the present and succeeding generations in this land are bound to keep the foresaid national oath and subscription inviolable*. And in the Solemn League, Article 1. *That we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love*. And Art. 5. *That they may remain conjoined in a firm peace and union to all posterity*.

We may add also, the sanctions of rewards and punishments descending to posterity, prove the obligation to be perpetual ;— which is, alas ! too visible in our case, as to the punishments inflicted for the breach of our covenants, and like to be further inflicted if repentance prevent not ; so that, as we have been a taunting proverb and a hissing for the guilt, we may look to be made a curse and an execration for the punishment of it. The distinction which some make use of to elude this obligation—“ that suppose they be materially bound, yet, seeing they have not sworn the covenants personally, they are not formally bound,” is both false and frivolous ; for our father’s oath having all the foresaid qualifications, binds us formally as an oath, though we have but virtually sworn it ; and whether the obligation be material or formal, implicit or explicit, it is all one in God’s sight if it be real, seeing even virtual obligations have frequently brought reward and punishments upon the head of the observers or breakers of them, as well as formal. Seeing, then, the obligation of the covenant upon us is evident to a demonstration, it cannot in justice be called a rebellious action against lawful authority, to declare in our station that we believe so much, and resolve to practise accordingly. It is indeed too true, that the wicked laws enacting the perpetual breaches of these covenants have never been rescinded ; but seeing they are wicked, and opposite to the commandment and covenant of the Lord, the supreme legislator, they are naturally void and null, and have been still so esteemed by us.

Object. 3. “ Albeit the National Covenant should be granted to be binding upon us the people of Scotland, and therefore may be renewed ; yet, to renew the Solemn League with England and Ireland as matters now stand, is ridiculous and impossible.”

Ans. This objection is partly answered before in the Sermons, page 14, and may be further cleared, if we consider that the Solemn League and Covenant may be taken under different respects, *either as a league amongst men, or as a covenant between God and men* : in the former sense, as it notes a *league offensive and defensive* made betwixt the collective bodies of these kingdoms, it is certain it cannot be taken by us who are but a poor, insignificant handful of people, far from any authority or influence in church or commonwealth ; the collective and representative body of the three kingdoms having basely abandoned their covenant with God and united in a sinful compact opposite thereunto, so that to make a league with England or Ireland in this sense, were to enter into a sinful confederacy with *apostate covenant-breakers* ; but in the latter acceptation, as it is a *covenant with God*, not as a witness only, but also as a *party contracting*, there is no absurdity or impossibility why Scotland or any part thereof may not renew it, obliging themselves by a solemn vow

to perform what they are bound to antecedently by the law of God;—and, if it be considered as an association, it respects those only who now do, or hereafter shall adhere unto it, whether here or in the other two kingdoms. Hence the words in the *preamble* of the Solemn League and Covenant, expressing the several ranks and the extent of the Covenanters, were not read at the renewin^g of it at Douglas, because we own ourselves to be under a leag^e with none but such as own the covenanted reformation; these, and these only, we heartily embrace as our colleagues into the dearest and nearest bonds of Christian union and fellowship, according to this League and Covenant.

As the revolt of the ten tribes from the tr^e religion and covenant of the Lord their God hindered not the godly of Judah, nor the small party that joined in the sincere worship of God out of Ephraim and Manasseh, to renew their covenant under the auspicious reigns of Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah; nor did the horrid apostacy of the Sectarian party in England impede our ancestors in renewing this Solemn League and Covenant in Scotland, Anno 1649; so neither can the defection of the generality of the three kingdoms, which is to be bewailed, if possible, with tears of blood, hinder us from testifying our adherence to the covenant, or invalidate what we have done therein.

Object. 4. “Albeit the action should be granted to be for the main, lawful, and right; yet it was most unseasonable to undertake it at such a time when the parliament and ministry are composed of a set of men that evidence no good affection to the present established Church in Scotland, who will be ready to interpret the action of a few immoderately and unseasonably zealous people as the deed of the whole Presbyterians in Scotland, and so make a handle thereof against them to impose upon them some new burdens; or to take such measures as will effectually put a stop to the more general renovation thereof throughout the land.”

In answer to this objection, we shall only desire the gentlemen that make it to remember—that now, for the space of 24 years, they have been crying the time is not come wherein we should set about covenant-renewing; one while they have pretended that the time was not seasonable, because such as were in authority were friends to the church, and it would look like a suspecting of their integrity to enter into covenant for the defence and reformation of religion, as if they would not show themselves active enough for these ends, and prove an irritation to them to turn enemies to Presbyterian government; it would cause them think the Presbyterians to be a people of indiscreet and ungovernable zeal, and so disgust them at the establishment. Another, while they excuse themselves from this duty, because those in authority are unfriendly to the Presbyterian establishment, they

must walk cautiously now, and manage prudently, lest they give any umbrage to Jacobites and Episcopalians to represent them ill at court, and so occasion the overthrow of the great security founded in the union treaty. Formerly, they needed not renew the covenant, because religion was not in danger—now they dare not attempt to do, because it is; they must wait till a well-affected parliament and good counsellors set it out of danger again, and then they will not need to covenant for its safety. These shifts are too shrewd discoveries of neutrality in this cause. It is to be feared that the godly have too long been hood-winked with such frivolous pretexts; and it is high time for every one that has the low case of the work of God in the land at heart to be awakened to renew their covenant with God, and keep the same. The motives and calls to the work above-mentioned will sufficiently (we hope) demonstrate the seasonableness of it; but if there was a defect as to the seasonableness, it was not because it was so soon set about, but because it was no sooner.

We shall not dwell any longer upon these and the like objections; there will not want mountains of difficulties in the way till such time as the Lord, coming by his Spirit in a day of his power, shall be pleased to level them and say, “What art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel? Thou shalt become a plain.” In that day (we doubt not) there shall be a willing people to enter into covenant with the Lord, even a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten; but, in the mean time, they would do well to consider the hazard they bring themselves into who wilfully raise objections against the covenant, because they are unwilling to enter into it, or be bound by it.

It may be some will desiderate an account of the other *solemn holy action* that followed on the back of this, in regard there were some circumstances in it not so ordinary in this church in former times, because of the paucity of public instruments; but neither do we think it needful to give any large account of it, nor will it fall so properly into this preface, which concerneth only national covenanting, and, it is likely the reader's patience is too far transgressed upon already; nor was there any *substantial or formal* difference betwixt it and the comely order of the Church of Scotland observed in our purest times of reformation in the celebration of that sacred ordinance, except what in the form arose from the circumstances we were in, and the reason now mentioned. The work was awful and great, the persons employed about it few and insignificant in their own eyes, as well as mean in the eyes of others; and hence the Lord's power and grace was the more conspicuous, who (we must not dissemble it) was present to the sensible experience of many, sealing instruction upon the hearts of some, and granting, strengthening, and confirming grace to others, for which he ought to have all the glory.

But because there has been (as we are informed) no small clamour raised anent some expressions used in debarring the ignorant and scandalous from the holy table of the Lord: *that the minister should have unreasonably and presumptuously excommunicated the Queen and parliament, and the whole ministers of the established Church of Scotland*; therefore, we shall here insert the very words relating to that affair as they were uttered by him, without any alteration.—In warning the ignorant, scandalous, and profane to beware of presuming to approach to the holy table of the Lord, the minister observed (as the manner is) the order of the decalogue, where, in the sins forbidden in the second commandment, as they are enumerated by the very Reverend the Assembly of Divines sitting at Westminster, in their humble advice concerning a Larger Catechism, we find these amongst others—“All devising, counselling, commanding, using, and any ways approving any religious worship not instituted by God himself, tolerating a false religion.—All superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever.” Hence, he expressed himself in these words—“I debar and excommunicate from this holy table of the Lord all devisers, commanders, users, or approvers of any religious worship not instituted by God in his Word, and all tolerators and countenancers thereof; and by consequence, I debar and excommunicate from this holy table of the Lord, Queen and Parliament, and all under them, who spread and propagate or tolerate a false, superstitious worship, ay and until they repent.” And in relation to the opposing of the covenants and work of reformation, he had these words—“I excommunicate and debar all who are opposers of our covenants and covenanted reformation, and all that have taken oaths contrary to our covenants, and such particularly as are takers of the oath of abjuration, whether ministers or others, until they repent.”

That this was no presumptuous and rebellious arrogance is evident, because the sins for which he debarred Queen and Parliament, and all others guilty of them, are proven from Scripture to be gross breaches of God’s law, and every violation thereof persisted in without repentance, is a sufficient cause (in the opinion of Protestant divines) to debar and exclude from the Lord’s table. Now, it is certain that even those ministers of the established church who make such obloquy against the work for this particular, do the same thing in effect every time that they administer this ordinance, for (as can be proved if they please to require it, or do deny it,) they excommunicate from the table all guilty of such sins as are forbidden in the

second commandment, according as they are specified in the foresaid catechism ; and so, by an infallible consequence, they excommunicate the Queen and Parliament, who are grossly guilty of the most of them, only they have not the courage ingenuously and freely to own and express the consequence, but that it follows natively and necessarily from the premises, even according to their own principles, they will never be able to disprove.

Now, reader, thou hast a just and true account, so far as was necessary, of our poor and weak endeavours in this matter, which we hope will, at least, stand as a witness and testimony (without arrogance we desire to speak it) against the apostacy of some and indifferency of others, who should have been to us as the *he-goats before the flock* in paving our way to Zion, but are rather *making to themselves captains* to carry us back to Babylon, and pollute our land with idolatry and superstition ; and, as a pledge to posterity that the Lord has not yet utterly deserted the land, though we rather wish, (if so it may consist with his holy purpose, *who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working*) that it might tend to excite some to bethink “whence they have fallen, and repent, and to do their first works, lest the Lord come quickly, and utterly remove his candlestick from us.” And engage them to renew these covenants in a more public way, and prosecute the ends of them with more zeal, fidelity, and constancy, “that the Lord may yet delight to dwell amongst us, make our judges peace, and our exactors righteousness,” and make us to be called *Hephzibah*, and our land *Beulah*.

To fill up the vacancy of this page, the reader may please to cast his eye upon the following passages, quoted from the writings of some of the ablest divines, wherewith these kingdoms have been blessed, since the first reformation from Popery ; wherein he will see, how far different an opinion they have entertained of the Covenant, from what are the thoughts of the learned Latitudinarians of our age.

A Testimony to the truth of JESUS CHRIST and to our Solemn League and Covenant, &c., subscribed by the Ministers of Christ, within the province of London, December 13, 1649.
Head IV.

“In order unto reformation and defence of religion within these three kingdoms, we shall never forget, how solemnly and cheerfully the Solemn League and Covenant was sworn with hands lifted up to the most high God.——We were, and are

abundantly satisfied, that our Solemn League and Covenant of September 27, 1643, is not only warrantable for the matter of it and manner of entering into it, but also of such excellency and importance,——That it will be very hard in all points to parallel it; and, therefore, as we did sincerely swear this covenant with God, with all our heart, and with all our soul, much rejoicing at the oath with a true intention to perform it, and not for promoting any politic design; so we do believe and profess to the world that we still stand as firmly engaged to the real performance of it, with our utmost endeavours, as at the first taking of it; and that it is not in the power of any person or persons on earth to dispense with it or absolve from it.”

The harmonious consent of the Ministers of the county Palatine Lancaster, with their Reverend Brethren the Ministers of the province of London. Head V.

“We shall never forget how solemnly it (the Solemn League and Covenant) was sworn, and what rejoicing there was at the oath, sundry at the taking of it weeping for joy; and when the Covenant was thus taken, we thought with ourselves, that surely now the crown is set upon England’s head: We judged the day of entering into this Covenant to be England’s coronation-day, as it was the day of the gladness of our hearts.”

Mr. Philip Nye’s Exhortation at the taking of the Covenant, September 29, 1643, p. 2.

“This oath is such, and in the matter and consequence of it of such concernment, as I can truly say, it is worthy of us, yea, of all the kingdoms of the world; for it is swearing fealty and allegiance to Christ the King of Kings, and a giving up of all these kingdoms, which are his inheritance, to be subdued more to his throne, and ruled more by his sceptre, upon whose shoulders the government is laid.”

THE
NATIONAL COVENANT;
OR,
THE CONFESSION OF FAITH
OF THE
KIRK OF SCOTLAND;

Subscribed at first by the King's Majesty and his Household, in the year of God, 1580; thereafter, by persons of all ranks, in the year 1581; by ordinance of the Lords of the Secret Council, and Acts of the General Assembly. Subscribed again by all sorts of persons in the year 1590, by a new ordinance of Council, at the desire of the General Assembly, with a bond for the maintenance of the true religion and the King's person: And subscribed in the year 1638, by the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burgesses, Ministers, and Commons, then under-subscribing; together with their resolution and promises for the causes after specified, to maintain the true religion, and the King's Majesty, according to the confession aforesaid, and Acts of Parliament; and upon the supplication of the General Assembly to his Majesty's High Commissioner, and the Lords of his Majesty's Honourable Privy Council. Subscribed again in the year 1639, by ordinance of Council, and Acts of General Assembly, &c. &c. The tenor whereof here followeth.

WE all, and every one of us underwritten protest, that, after long and due examination of our own consciences in matters of true and false religion, we are now thoroughly resolved in the truth by the Word and Spirit of God: And, therefore, we believe with our hearts, confess with our mouths, subscribe with our hands, and constantly affirm before God and the whole world, that this only is the true Christian faith and religion pleasing God, revealed to the world by the preaching of the blessed evangel; and is received, believed, and defended by many and sundry notable kirks and realms, but chiefly by the *Kirk of Scotland, and sometimes by the King's Majesty, and the three estates of this realm*, as God's eternal truth and only ground of our salvation, as more particularly is expressed in the Confession of our Faith, established and publickly confirmed by sundry Acts of Parliaments, and now of a long time have been openly professed by the King's Majesty, and whole body of this

realm, both in burgh and land. To the which Confession and form of religion, we willingly agree in our own consciences, in all points, as unto God's undoubted truth and verity, grounded only upon his written word. And, therefore, we abhor and detest all contrary religion and doctrine; but chiefly all kind of Papistry in general, and particular heads, even as they are now damned and confuted by the word of God, and Kirk of Scotland. But in special we detest and refuse the usurped authority of that Roman Antichrist upon the Scripture of God, upon the Kirk, the civil Magistrate, and consciences of men: All his tyrannous laws made upon indifferent things against our Christian liberty: His erroneous doctrine against the sufficiency of the written word, the perfection of the law, the offices of Christ and his blessed evangel: His corrupted doctrine concerning original sin, our natural inability and rebellion to God's law, our justification by faith only, our imperfect sanctification and obedience to the law; the nature, number, and use of the holy sacraments: His five bastard sacraments; with all his rites, ceremonies, and false doctrine, added to the ministration of the true sacraments without the Word of God: His cruel judgment against infants departing without the sacrament: His absolute necessity of baptism: His blasphemous opinion of transubstantiation, or real presence of Christ's body in the elements, and receiving of the same by the wicked, or bodies of men: His dispensations with solemn oaths, perjuries, and degrees of marriage forbidden in the Word: His cruelty against the innocent divorced: His devilish mass: His blasphemous priesthood: His profane sacrifice for the sins of the dead and the quick: His canonization of men; calling upon angels or saints departed; worshipping of imagery, relics, and crosses; dedicating of kirks, altars, days, vows to creatures: His purgatory, prayers for the dead; praying or speaking in a strange language; with his processions and blasphemous litany, and multitude of advocates or mediators: His manifold orders, auricular confession: His desperate and uncertain repentance: His general and doubtful faith: His satisfactions of men for their sins: His justification by works, *opus operatum*, works of supererogation, merits, pardons, peregrinations, and stations: His holy water, baptizing of bells, conjuring of spirits, crossing, saying, anointing, conjuring, hallowing of God's creatures, with the superstitious opinion joined therewith: His worldly monarchy, and wicked hierarchy: His three solemn vows, with all his shavellings of sundry sorts: His erroneous and bloody decrees made at Trent, with all the subscribers and approvers of that cruel and bloody bond, conjured against the Kirk of God.

And finally, we detest all his vain allegories, rites, signs, and traditions brought into the Kirk, without or against the Word

of God and doctrine of his true reformed Kirk; to the which we join ourselves willingly, in doctrine, faith, religion, discipline, and use of the holy sacraments, as lively members of the same in Christ our head: Promising and swearing by the *Great Name of the Lord our God*, that we shall continue in the obedience of the doctrine and discipline of this kirk, and shall defend the same according to our vocation and power, all the days of our lives, under the pains contained in the law, and danger both of body and soul, in the day of God's fearful judgment. And, seeing that many are stirred up by Satan and that Roman Anti-Christ, to promise, swear, subscribe, and for a time use the holy sacraments in the Kirk deceitfully against their own consciences, minding thereby, first, under the external cloak of religion, to corrupt and subvert secretly God's true religion within the Kirk, and afterwards, when the time may serve, to become open enemies and persecutors of the same, under vain hope of the Pope's dispensation devised against the Word of God, to his greater confusion, and their double condemnation in the day of the Lord Jesus:

We, therefore, willing to take away all suspicion of hypocrisy, and of such double dealing with God and his Kirk, protest, and call, *the Searcher of all hearts for witness*, that our minds and hearts do fully agree with this our *Confession, Promise, Oath, and Subscription*, so that we are not moved with any worldly respect, but are persuaded only in our own consciences, through the knowledge and love of God's true religion, imprinted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as we shall answer to him in the day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. And because we perceive that the quietness and stability of our religion and

* *The lawful supreme Magistrate.*

maintaining of this kirk, and ministration of justice amongst us, we protest and promise with our hearts, under the same oath,

† *The person and authority of such, when God of his mercy shall grant them to us.*

hand-write, and pains, that we shall defend [his† person and authority,] with our goods, bodies, and lives, in the defence of Christ's evangel, liberties of our country, ministration of justice, and punishment of iniquity, against all enemies within this realm, or without, as we desire our God to be a strong and merciful defender to us in the day of our death, and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. To whom with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory eternally. Amen.

Likeas, many Acts of Parliament not only in general do abrogate, annul, and rescind all laws, statutes, acts, constitutions,

canons, civil or municipal, with all other ordinances and pratique penalties whatsoever, made in prejudice of the true religion and professors thereof; or of the true kirk-discipline, jurisdiction, and freedom thereof; or in favours of idolatry and superstition; or of the Papistical kirk; as Act 3, Act 31, Parl. 1; Act 23, Parl. 11; Act 114, Parl. 12, of King James VI. that Papistry and superstition may be utterly suppressed, according to the intention of the Acts of Parliament, repeated in the 5th Act, Parl. 20, King James VI. And to that end they ordain all Papists and priests to be punished with manifold civil and ecclesiastical pains, as adversaries to God's true religion, preached, and by law established within this realm, Act 24, Parl. 11, King James VI.; as common enemies to all Christian government, Act 18, Parl. 16, King James VI.; as rebellers and gain-standers of our sovereign Lord's authority, Act 47, Parl. 3, King James VI.; and as idolaters, Act 104, Parl. 7, King James VI. But also in particular, by and attour the Confession of Faith, do abolish and condemn the Pope's authority and jurisdiction out of this land, and ordain the maintainers thereof to be punished, Act 2, Parl. 1; Act 51, Parl. 3; Act 106, Parl. 7; Act 114, Parl. 12, King James VI., do condemn the Pope's erroneous doctrine, or any other erroneous doctrine repugnant to any of the articles of the true and Christian religion, publicly preached, and by law established in this realm; and ordain the spreaders and makers of books, or libels, or letters, or writs of that nature, to be punished, Act 46, Parl. 3; Act 106, Parl. 7; Act 24, Parl. 11, King James VI., do condemn all baptism conform to the Pope's kirk, and the idolatry of the mass; and ordain all sayers, wilful hearers, and concealers of the mass, the maintainers and reseters of the priests, Jesuits, trafficking Papists, to be punished without any exception or restriction, Act 5, Parl. 1; Act 120, Parl. 12; Act 164, Parl. 13; Act 193, Parl. 14; Act 1, Parl. 19; Act 5, Parl. 20, King James VI., do condemn all erroneous books and writs, containing erroneous doctrine against the religion presently professed or containing superstitious rites and ceremonies Papistical, whereby the people are greatly abused; and ordain the home-bringers of them to be punished, Act 25, Parl. 11, King James VI., do condemn the monuments and dregs of the bygone idolatry, as going to crosses, observing the festival days of Saints and other superstitious and Papistical rites, to the dishonour of God, contempt of true religion, and fostering of great error among the people; and ordain the users of them to be punished for the second fault, as idolaters, Act 104, Parl. 7, King James VI.

Likeas, many acts of parliament are conceived for maintenance of God's true Christian religion, and the purity thereof in

doctrine and sacraments of the true church of God, the liberty and freedom thereof in her national synodical assemblies, presbyteries, sessions, policy, discipline, and jurisdiction thereof, as that purity of religion and liberty of the church was used, professed, exercised, preached, and confessed, according to the reformation of religion in this realm. As for instance, the 99th Act, Parl. 7; Act 23, Parl. 11; Act 114, Parl. 12; Act 160, Parl. 13, of King James VI., ratified by the 4th Act of King Charles. So that the 6th Act, Parl. 1, and 68th Act, Parl. 6, of King James VI., in the year of God 1579, declares the ministers of the blessed evangel, whom God of his mercy had raised up, or hereafter should raise, agreeing with them that then lived in doctrine and administration of the sacraments, and the people that professed Christ as he was then offered in the evangel and doth communicate with the holy sacraments, (as in the reformed kirks of this realm they were publicly administrate) according to the Confession of Faith, to be the true and holy kirk of Christ Jesus within this realm, and decerns and declares all and sundry who either gainsay the word of the evangel, received and approved as the heads of the Confession of Faith, professed in parliament in the year of God 1560, specified also in the first Parliament of King James VI. and ratified in this present parliament; more particularly do specify, or that refuse the administration of the holy sacraments as they were then ministered, to be no members of the said kirk within this realm, and true religion presently professed, so long as they keep themselves so divided from the society of Christ's body; and the subsequent Act 69, Parl. 6, of King James VI. declares, that there is none other face of kirk, nor other face of religion, than that was presently at that time by the favour of God established within this realm, which therefore is ever styled, *God's true religion—Christ's true religion—the true and Christian religion—and a perfect religion*; which, by manifold acts of parliament, all within this realm are bound to subscribe the articles thereof, the Confession of Faith, to recant all doctrine and errors repugnant to any of the said articles, Act 4 and 9, Parl. 1; Act 45, 46, 47, Parl. 3; Act 71, Parl. 6; Act 106, Parl. 7; Act 24, Parl. 11; Act 123, Parl. 12; Act 194 and 197, Parl. 14, of King James VI. And all magistrates, sheriffs, &c. on the one part, are ordained to search, apprehend, and punish all contraveners; for instance, Act 5, Parl. 1; Act 104, Parl. 7; Act 25, Parl. 11, King James VI.; and that, notwithstanding of the King's Majesty's licence to the contrary, which are discharged and declared to be of no force, in so far as they tend in any ways to the prejudice and hinder of the execution of the acts of parliament against Papists and adversaries of true religion, Act 106, Parl. 7, King James VI. On the other part, in the 47th Act, Parl. 3, of King James VI.

it is declared and ordained, seeing the cause of God's true religion and his highness' authority are so joined, as the hurt of the one is common to both; and that none shall be reputed as loyal and faithful subjects to our sovereign lord or his authority, but be punishable as rebellers and gainstanders of the same, who shall not give their confession, and make their profession of the said true religion, and that they who, after defection, shall give the confession of their faith of new, they shall promise to continue therein in time coming, to maintain our sovereign lord's authority, and at the uttermost of their power to fortify, assist, and maintain the true preachers and professors of Christ's evangel against whatsoever enemies and gainstanders of the same; and namely, against all such (of whatsoever nation, estate, or degree they be,) that have joined and bound themselves, or have assisted, or assist to set forward, and execute the cruel decrees of Trent, contrary to the preachers and true professors of the Word of God, which is repeated, word by word, in the articles of pacification at Perth, the 23d of February, 1572; approved by Parliament, the last of April, 1573; ratified in Parliament, 1587; and related, Act 123, Parl. 12, of King James VI., with this addition, that they are bound to resist all treasonable uproars and hostilities that are raised against the true religion, the King's Majesty, and the true professors.

Likeas all lieges are bound to maintain the King's Majesty's royal person and authority, the authority of Parliaments, without the which, neither any laws or lawful judicatories can be established, Act 130, Act 131, Parl. 8, King James VI., and the subjects' liberties, who ought only to live and be governed by the King's laws, the common laws of this realm allenarly, Act 48, Parl. 3, King James I.; Act 79, Parl. 6, King James IV.; repeated in the Act 131, Parl. 8, King James VI. Which, if they be innovated or prejudged, the commission anent the union of the two kingdoms of Scotland and England, which is the sole Act of the 17 Parl. of King James VI., declares such confusion would ensue, as this realm could be no more a free monarchy; because, by the fundamental laws, ancient privileges, offices, and liberties of this kingdom, not only the princely authority of his Majesty's royal descent hath been these many ages maintained, but also the people's security of their lands, livings, rights, offices, liberties, and dignities preserved; and, therefore, for the preservation of the said true religion, laws, and liberties of this kingdom, it is statute by the 8th Act, Parl. 1; repeated in the 99th Act, Parl. 7; ratified in the 23d Act, Parl. 11; and 114th Act, Parl. 12, of King James VI.; and 4th Act of King Charles I. That all kings and princes at their coronation and reception of their princely authority, shall make their faithful promise by

their solemn oath in the presence of the eternal God, that enduring the whole time of their lives, they shall serve the same eternal God to the uttermost of their power, according as he hath required in his most holy Word, contained in the Old and New Testaments;—and, according to the same Word, shall maintain the true religion of Christ Jesus, the preaching of his holy Word, the due and right ministration of the sacraments now received and preached within this realm, (according to the Confession of Faith,) and shall abolish and gainstand all false religion contrary to the same, and shall rule the people committed to their charge according to the will and command of God, revealed in his foresaid Word, and according to the laudable laws and constitutions received in this realm, no ways repugnant to the said will of the eternal God; and shall procure, to the uttermost of their power, to the kirk of God and whole Christian people, true and perfect peace in all time coming; and that they shall be careful to root out of their empire all heretics and enemies to the true worship of God, who shall be convicted by the true kirk of God of the foresaid crimes, which was observed by his Majesty* at his coronation in Edinburgh, 1633, as may be seen in the order of the coronation.

* *King Charles I.*

In obedience to the commandment of God, conform to the practice of the godly in former times, and according to the laudable example of our worthy and religious progenitors, ——— which was warranted also by Act of Council, commanding a general bond to be made and subscribed by his Majesty's subjects of all ranks, for two causes: one was, for defending the true religion as it was then reformed and is expressed in the Confession of Faith above-mentioned, and a former large Confession established by sundry acts of lawful General Assemblies, and of Parliament, unto which it hath relation, set down in public Catechisms, and which had been for many years (with a blessing from heaven) preached and professed in this kirk and kingdom as God's undoubted truth, grounded only upon his written Word. The other cause was, for maintaining the King's Majesty, his person, and estate:—the true worship of God and the King's authority being so straitly joined as that they had the same friends and common enemies and did stand and fall together; and finally, being convinced in our minds, and confessing with our mouths, that the present and succeeding generations in this land are bound to keep the foresaid national oath and subscription inviolable. We, ——— ——— ——— ——— ——— under subscribing, considering divers times before, and especially at this time, the danger of the true reformed religion, ——— ———, and of the public peace of the kingdom; by

the manifold innovations and evils generally contained and particularly mentioned, [in supplications, complaints, and protestations,*] do hereby profess, and before God, his angels, and the world, solemnly declare, that, with our whole hearts we agree and resolve, all the days of our life, constantly to adhere unto and defend the foresaid true religion; and (forbearing the practice of all novations already introduced in the matters of the worship of God, or approbation of the corruptions of the public government of the kirk, or civil places and power of kirkmen,† till they be tried and allowed in free assemblies and in Parliaments,) to labour by all means lawful to recover the purity and liberty of the gospel, as it was established and professed before the foresaid novations; and because, after due examination, we plainly perceive, and undoubtedly believe, that the evils contained in our [supplications, complaints, and protestations,‡] have no warrant of the Word of God; are contrary to the articles of the foresaid Confession, to the intention and meaning of the blessed reformers of religion in this land, to the above-written Acts of Parliament, and do sensibly tend to the re-establishing of the Protestant religion and tyranny, and to the subversion and ruin of the true reformed religion, and of our liberties, laws, and estates. We also declare, that the foresaid Confessions are to be interpreted, and ought to be understood of the foresaid novations and evils, no less than if every one of them had been expressed in the foresaid Confessions, and that we are obliged to detest and abhor them, amongst other particular heads of Papistry abjured therein; and, therefore, from the knowledge and conscience of our duty to God, [to our King and country,§] without any worldly respect or inducement, so far as human infirmity will suffer, wishing a further measure of the grace of God for this effect, we promise and swear by the *great name of the Lord our God*, to continue in the profession and obedience of the foresaid religion; that we shall defend the same, and resist all these contrary errors and corruptions, according to our vocation, and to the uttermost of that power that God hath put in our hands, all the days of our life; and, in like manner, with the same heart we declare before God and men, that we have no intention nor desire to attempt any thing that may turn to the dishonour of

* *Remonstrances, declarations and testimonies of old, and of late.*

† *Remonstrances, declarations and testimonies.*

§ *To righteous governors, (when obtained,) and to our country.*

† Or any other corruptions thereof, Prelatic or Erastian, either tried or to be tried; such as indulgence, the toleration, the magistrates appointing fests without advice and consent of the church, dissolving assemblies, &c

• *The lawful supreme Magistrate's.*

to the uttermost of our power, with our means and lives, and to the defence of [our dread sovereign, the King's Majesty, his

† *The persons and authority of sovereigns, having the qualifications which the Scriptures require.*

‡ *The lawful supreme Magistrate's.*

§ *Lawful supreme Magistrate.*

God, or to the diminution of [the King's*] greatness and authority; but on the contrary, we promise and swear, that we shall, [person and authority,†] in the defence and preservation of the foresaid true religion, liberties, and laws of the kingdom; as also, to the mutual defence and assistance every one of us of another, in the same cause of maintaining the true religion and [his Majesty's‡] authority, with our best counsel, our bodies, means, and whole power, against all sorts of persons whatsoever. So that whatsoever shall be done to the least of us for that cause, shall be taken as done to us all in general, and to every one of us in particular; and that we shall, neither directly nor indirectly, suffer ourselves to be divided or withdrawn, by whatsoever suggestion, allurements, or terror, from this blessed and loyal conjunction; nor shall cast in any let or impediment that may stay or hinder any such resolution, as by common consent shall be found to conduce for so good ends;—but, on the contrary, shall, by all lawful means, labour to further and promote the same, and if any such dangerous and divisive motion be made to us by word or write, we, and every one of us, shall either suppress it, or if need be, shall incontinent make the same known that it may be timeously obviated; neither do we fear the foul aspersions of rebellion, combination, or what else our adversaries from their craft and malice would put upon us, seeing what we do is so well warranted, and ariseth from an unfeigned desire to maintain the true worship of God, the majesty of [§ our King,] and peace of the kingdom for the common happiness of ourselves and the posterity.

And because we cannot look for a blessing from God upon our proceedings, except with our profession and subscription, we join such a life and conversation as beseemeth Christians who have renewed their covenant with God: We, therefore, faithfully promise, for ourselves, our followers, and all other under us, both in public, in our particular families and personal carriage, to endeavour to keep ourselves within the bounds of Christian liberty, and to be good examples to others of all godliness, soberness, and righteousness, and of every duty we owe to God and man. And that this our union and conjunction may be observed without violation, we call the living God the searcher of our hearts to witness, who knoweth this to be our sincere desire and unfeigned resolution, as we shall answer

to Jesus Christ, in the great day, and under the pain of God's everlasting wrath and of infamy, and loss of all honour and respect in this world: Most humbly beseeching the Lord to strengthen us by his Holy Spirit for this end, and to bless our desires and proceedings with a happy success that religion and righteousness may flourish in the land, to the glory of God, the honour of [our King*] and peace and comfort of us all. In witness whereof we have subscribed with our hands all the premises, &c.

* *Lawful supreme Magistrates.*

The article of this covenant, which was at first subscription † referred to the General Assembly, being now determined, and thereby the five articles of Perth, the government of the Kirk by Bishops, the civil places and power of kirkmen upon the reasons and grounds contained in the Acts of the General Assembly, declared to be unlawful within this kirk, we subscribe according to the determination foresaid.

† *Anno 1638.*

THE
SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT,
FOR
REFORMATION AND DEFENCE OF RELIGION, &c.

WE, having before our eyes the glory of God, and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the honour and happiness of [the * King's Majesty and his posterity] and the true public liberty, safety, and peace of the

* *Lawful supreme Magistrates.*

kingdoms, wherein every one's private condition is included; and calling to mind the treacherous and bloody plots, conspiracies, attempts and practices of the enemies of God against the true religion and professors thereof in all places, especially in these three kingdoms, ever since the reformation of religion; and how much their rage, power, and presumption are of late, and at this time increased and exercised, whereof the deplorable estate of the church and kingdom of Ireland, the distressed estate of the church and kingdom of England, and the dangerous estate of the church and kingdom of Scotland, are present and public

† *After all supplications, remonstrances, protestations, and sufferings of our fathers, and our own grievous sufferings and contentings, both before and since the late Revolution.*

testimonies. We have now at last [† after other means of supplication, remonstrance, protestation and suffering] for the preservation of ourselves and our religion from utter ruin and destruction, according to the commendable practice of these kingdoms in former times, and the exam-

ple of God's people in other nations, after mature deliberation, resolved and determined to enter into a mutual and Solemn League and Covenant: Wherein we all subscribe, and each one of us for himself, with our hands lifted up to the Most High God, do swear—

1. That we shall sincerely, really, and constantly, through the grace of God, endeavour in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scot-

land, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against our common enemies; the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the Word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches; and shall endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms, to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government, Directory for Worship and Catechizing; that we and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.

2. That we shall, in like manner, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy (that is, church-government by arch-bishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, arch-deacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy) superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness; lest we partake in other men's sins, and thereby be in danger to receive of their plagues; and that the Lord may be one, and his name one in the three kingdoms.

3. We shall with the same sincerity, reality, and constancy, in our several vocations, endeavour with our estates and lives mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the parliaments* and the liberties of the kingdoms; and to preserve and defend [the King's† Majesty's] person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms; that the world may bear witness with our consciences of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish [his ‡ Majesty's] just power and greatness.

* *When restored, according to their ancient foundation.*

† *The lawful supreme Magistrate's.*

‡ *The lawful Magistrate's.*

4. We shall also with all faithfulness endeavour the discovery of all such as have been, or shall be incendiaries, malignants, or evil instruments, by hindering the reformation of religion, dividing [the § King] from his people, or one of the kingdoms from another, or making any faction or parties amongst the people contrary to this League and Covenant, that they may be brought to public trial, and receive condign punishment as the degree of their offences shall require or deserve, or the supreme judicatories of both kingdoms respectively, or others having power from them for that effect, shall judge convenient.

§ *The lawful Magistrate, when obtained.*

5. And, whereas, the happiness of a blessed peace between these kingdoms, denied in former times to our progenitors, was

by the good providence of God granted
** Our Reformers.* [us *] and——concluded and settled by
 both Parliaments, we shall, each one of
 us, according to our place and interest, endeavour that they
 may be, and remain conjoined † in a firm
 † *As they were then.* peace and union to all posterity, and that
 justice may be done upon the wilful op-
 posers thereof, in manner expressed in the precedent article.

6. We shall also, according to our places and callings in this
 common cause of religion, liberty and peace of the kingdoms,
 assist and defend all those that enter into this League and Cove-
 nant, in the maintaining and pursuing thereof; and shall not
 suffer ourselves, directly, or indirectly, by whatsoever combina-
 tion, persuasion or terror, to be divided and withdrawn from
 this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection
 to the contrary part, or to give ourselves to a detestable indif-
 ferency or neutrality in this cause which so much concerneth
 the glory of God, the good of the kingdoms, and honour of

‡ *The lawful supreme Ma-
 gistrate.*

[the ‡ King;] but shall all the days of our
 lives zealously and constantly continue
 therein against all opposition, and promote
 the same according to our power against all lets and impediments
 whatsoever; and what we are not able ourselves to suppress or
 overcome, we shall reveal and make known, that it may be
 timely prevented or removed—all which we shall do as in the
 sight of God.

And because these kingdoms are guilty of many sins and pro-
 vocations against God, and his Son Jesus Christ, as is too mani-
 fest by our present distresses and dangers, the fruits thereof;
 we profess and declare before God and the world, our unfeigned
 desire to be humbled for our sins and for the sins of these king-
 doms, especially that we have not, as we ought, valued the ines-
 timable benefit of the gospel—that we have not laboured for the
 purity and power thereof—and that we have not endeavoured
 to receive Christ in our hearts, nor to walk worthy of him in
 our lives, which are the causes of other sins and transgressions
 so much abounding amongst us; and our true and unfeigned
 purpose, desire, and endeavour for ourselves, and all others un-
 der our power and charge, both in public and private, in all
 duties we owe to God and man to amend our lives; and each one
 to go before another in the example of a real reformation, that
 the Lord may turn away his wrath and heavy indignation, and
 establish these churches and kingdoms in truth and peace. And
 this covenant we make in the presence of Almighty God, the
 searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same,
 as we shall answer at the great day, when the secrets of all hearts

shall be disclosed; most humbly beseeching the Lord to strengthen us by his Holy Spirit for this end, and to bless our desires and proceedings with such success as may be deliverance and safety to his people, and encouragement to other Christian churches groaning under, or in danger of the yoke of Anti-Christian tyranny, to join in the same, or like association and covenant, to the glory of God, the enlargement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the peace and tranquillity of Christian kingdoms and commonwealths.

N.B. These Covenants above-written, formerly nationally taken and renewed, and still nationally binding, we, in our private station only, swear and subscribe in their genuine sense, conform to the Explication and Application thereof, in our present Acknowledgment of the Public Sins and Breaches of the same, and Engagement to the Duties contained therein, which do in a special way relate to the present times, and are proper for our capacities therein.

A

SOLEMN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

OF

PUBLIC SINS,

AND

BREACHES OF THE NATIONAL COVENANT, AND SOLEMN
LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

WE all, and every one of us,—being, *by the good hand of our God upon us*, now, after a long and due deliberation, determined to testify to the world, for the glory of God and the exoneration of our consciences, in the matter of our duty, our adherence to the whole of our attained Reformation, by renewing these our vows and covenant engagements with God, and knowing that it is a necessary preparative for the right performance of that so great and solemn a duty, that we be duly sensible of, and deeply humbled for, the many heinous breaches thereof, which these nations, and we ourselves in particular, are guilty of, do therefore, with that measure of sorrow and repentance which God of his mercy shall be pleased to grant us, desire to acknowledge and confess our own sins and violations of these vows, and the sins and transgressions of our fathers, to which we have also an example left us by *the Cloud of Witnesses which through faith and patience have inherited the promises*, ever since the Lord had a visible national church upon earth, and more especially by our progenitors in this nation, as for instance, in the year 1596, “Wherein the General Assembly, and all kirk judicatories, with the concurrence of many of the nobility, gentry, and burgesses, did with many tears acknowledge the breach of the National Covenant, and engaged themselves into a reformation, even as our predecessors and theirs had done in the General Assembly and Convention of Estates in the year 1567.” As also the more recent practice of the godly renewing the National Covenant, and acknowledging the breaches of it, both before they obtained the concurrence of civil authority, in the year 1638, and again, by authority, in the year 1639. And that noble precedent of that *National Solemn Acknowledgment of Public Sins and Breaches of the Solemn League*

and Covenant, and Solemn Engagement to all the duties contained therein, (which we are here taking for our pattern, and enlarging the same, as the sad sins and transgressions since that time committed, and the circumstances of time give occasion) condescended upon, “by the Commission of the General Assembly, and approved by the Committee of Estates; and publicly owned in all the churches, at the renewing of the Solemn League, Anno 1648, and 1649, together with that solemn renovation thereof, accompanied with such confession of sins as did best suit that time, by that small company of the Lord’s people at Lanark, before their discomfiture at Pentland hills. And perceiving by the foresaid instances, that this duty, when gone about out of conscience, hath very often been attended with a reviving out of troubles—or at least out of deadness, security, and formality, under which we and the land are at present sinking, and with a blessing and success from heaven;—‘We do humbly and sincerely, as in His sight who is the searcher of hearts, acknowledge the many sins and great transgressions of the land; we have done wickedly, our kings, our princes, our nobles, our judges, our officers, our teachers, and our people. Albeit the Lord hath long and clearly spoken unto us, we have not hearkened to his voice. Albeit he hath followed us with tender mercies, we have not been allured to wait upon him and walk in his way. And though he hath stricken us, yet we have not grieved: nay, though he hath consumed us, we have refused to receive correction. We have not remembered to render unto the Lord according to his goodness, and according to our vows and promises; but have gone away backward, by a perpetual backsliding, and have most sinfully and shamefully broken the National Covenant, and all the articles of the Solemn League and Covenant, which our fathers sware before God, angels and men.’” Albeit there has been in the land, ever since the reformation of religion, some of all ranks who have been for a testimony unto the truth, and for a name of joy and praise unto the Lord, by living godly, studying to keep their garments pure, and being steadfast in the covenant and cause of God; and there yet continues to be some, though reduced to a very small number, destitute of outward power and ability, and other helps fit for their right managing of a testimony, wanting the countenance of civil authority, and having few to feed or lead them; who are, notwithstanding all these difficulties, labouring in the strength of Christ to keep the good old way of those faithful witnesses who are gone before, in bearing testimony to the truths of Christ. “Yet we have reason to acknowledge, that most of us in this land have not endeavoured with that reality, sincerity, and constancy that did become us, to preserve the work of reformation in the Kirk of Scotland, as we are obliged by the first

article of the Solemn League, and by the National Covenant; wherein we promise and swear by the great name of the Lord our God, that we shall continue in the obedience of the doctrine and discipline of this kirk, and shall defend the same according to our vocation and power all the days of our lives, under the pains contained in the law, and danger both of body and soul in the day of God's fearful judgment, and resist all contrary errors and corruptions, according to our vocations, and the utmost of that power God hath put in our hands all the days of our life—according to these Scriptures.”

Ezra, ix. 10, “And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments. Verse 11. Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, &c.” Isaiah, xxiv. 5, “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” Jeremiah, ix. 13, “And the Lord saith, because they have forsaken my law, which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein. Verse 15. Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, behold I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.” Daniel, vii. 25, “And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws.” Galatians, v. 1, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” 1 Timothy, iv. 16, “Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” 2 Timothy, i. 13, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith, and love, which is in Christ Jesus.” Revelation, iii. 10, 11, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

“But we have been so far from such endeavours, that there hath been a stupid submission to our rulers and great ones, breaking down and ruining the whole work of reformation, razing the bulwarks thereof, rescinding the laws in favour of the same, and not only breaking but burning the covenants for preserving it, enacting the breaches thereof, and declaring the obligation thereof void and criminal to be owned; and, upon the ruins thereof, setting up abjured Diocesan Erastian Prelacy, with its concomitant bondage of patronages—a blasphemous and sacrilegious supremacy and arbitrary power in the magistrate over church and state. There was little conscience made of

constant endeavours to preserve the reformation, when there was not a seasonable testimony exhibited against these audacious and heaven-daring attempts; when our ministers were by a wicked edict ejected from their charges, both they and the people too easily complied with it. Albeit, in the National Covenant, the land is obliged to defend the reformation, and to labour by all means lawful to recover the purity and liberty of the gospel, by forbearing the practice of all novations introduced in the worship of God, or approbation of the corruptions of the public government of the kirk: yet was there given all the approbation required by law of the novation and corruption of Prelacy by hearing the Prelatic curates. Both ministers and people, in a great measure complied with, submitted unto, and connived at the encroachments of the supremacy and absolute power, both in accepting and countenancing the former indulgences and later toleration; the generality took and subscribed oaths and bonds imposed during the reigns of those tyrants, Charles II. and James Duke of York, pressing conformity with the then establishments of church and state, most contrary to the reformation which the nation had sworn to preserve; some of these oaths and bonds restraining the takers from all endeavours to preserve it, as those that renounced the privilege of defensive arms; some of them abjuring the covenants expressly, and condemning the prosecution of the ends of them as rebellion, viz., the declaration and test; the most part did, Issachar like, crouch beneath all the burthens of maintaining and defending an arbitrary power and absolute tyranny, wholly employed and applied for the destruction of reformation, and paid such subsidies and supplies as were declaredly imposed for upholding the tyrant's usurpations, and suppressing all endeavours to preserve the reformation."

And after the Lord was pleased in mercy to break the rod of oppression, and burst the bands of that horrid tyranny from off his people's necks, and to allow us a time of peace and ease; yet have we not made conscience of keeping this our oath; but instead of all lawful means to preserve the discipline and government of this church, there have been frequent invasions made thereupon by the civil powers, exercising an Erastian supremacy over her assemblies, by indicating, proroguing, and dissolving them at their pleasure, and in their name and authority; whereby Christ's supremacy and kingly dignity was highly injured. And as the state for their part have, contrary to this article, made these usurpations upon the government of the church, so have backslidden ministers in their stations shamefully succumbed to, been silent at, and pleaded in defence of these usurpations, and have not zealously and faithfully asserted their Master's prerogatives, and the privileges of his church, sacrilegiously

encroached upon by the magistrate. And people likewise have, in their stations, been unconcerned about these wrongs and injuries done to Christ, and have not used all lawful endeavours with their superiors (which they own as such,) whether of church or state, in order to reformation thereof, nor made faithful protestations against them, when they could not obtain redress—and as the government of the church has not been duly preserved; so there has been a want of constant endeavours to preserve pure the doctrine of this reformed church; and that ever since that fatal distraction of *public-resolution principles* began to creep into this church, which corrupted people in that doctrine of abstaining from association with malignants and enemies to truth and godliness, and so far prevailed that the avowed enemies of religion were brought into places of greatest trust and authority. And these associations have not been made only with the haters of religion at home, but are also entered into with the enemies to the Protestant religion abroad; and many backsliding ministers in the late times of tyranny were very faulty in this point of not labouring to preserve the purity of doctrine, either by express condemning of some important truths then persecuted, or at least in being silent and not asserting them, nor applying their doctrine to the time's corruptions; whereby many of the people were left to be overcome by snares—"and so laid open to seek out other principles to justify their practices of compliance, or extravagances on the right or left hand, not consistent with the doctrine and rules of the Church of Scotland, others were not constant in confessing those doctrines before men when called to suffer for, and avouch them." Neither are there at this day, nor has there been all along during these years of peace and quiet, suitable endeavours for suppressing all sorts of unsound doctrine, or purging the land of the leaven of erroneous principles. Although there has been many laws made against Popery, yet how have they been put to execution, when Papists are so rife and Popery so prevalent?—the idolatrous mass being set up in several places of the kingdom; the maintainers and promoters of Quakerism, Bourigianism, Arminianism, &c. are not punished, but protected by the state, and connived at by the church. And whereas, the right endeavouring of maintaining sound doctrine, doth require uprightness and sincerity in the profession and belief thereof, and a suitable practice accompanying that belief; we have it to lament that the most part of us in this land are but hypocritical in the profession of the doctrines of the gospel, and want a suitable practice and conversation becoming the gospel, cause, and cross of Christ. Many are grossly ignorant of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, or study the circumstantial and controverted more than the fundamental truths.

There has also been great short coming of *real, sincere, and constant endeavours to preserve the worship of God*, public and private. “In times of hazard, many ministers left off preaching, and the people hearing. We have been negligent and remiss in family worship; and, instead of preserving, many have done much to discourage and hinder it: And in secret we have been formal and careless: Many have satisfied themselves with the purity of the ordinances, neglecting the power thereof, yea, some have turned aside to crooked ways destructive to both.” Neither have we been careful to preserve the discipline, church censures being laid aside, and not impartially exercised against scandals, personal and public. Scandalous persons being admitted to hold up their children to baptism, and to partake of the Lord’s table and other privileges of the church, without respect to the rules of Christ. The discipline of the church hath also been circumscribed, limited, and bounded by Acts of Parliament, and is now rendered ineffectual by the late Act of the British Parliament, entitled, *Act for preventing the Disturbing of those of the Episcopal Communion in that part of Great Britain called Scotland*. So that ministers could not without transgressing these Acts (which they too punctually observe) draw out the sword of discipline against many covenant-breakers; perjured hireling-curates being allowed to enjoy churches and benefices without censure or molestation, if subject to the civil government, as is evident from the 27th Act of the fifth Session of William’s first Parliament, entitled, *Act concerning the Church*. Ministers have neglected to draw out the sword of discipline, duly and impartially against scandalous persons of every rank and quality; so that many gross offenders have been passed over without censure, as, namely, such as shed the blood of the Lord’s people, complied with the tyrants and usurpers in the times of persecution, by testing, bonding, hearing of curates, paying of cess and other taxations, intelligencers, and informers against the people of God, accepters of indulgences and toleration, and such as preached under the covert of remissions and indemnities bought by sums of money from the council, such as had been lax and negligent in testifying against the corruptions of the times, were not brought to an acknowledgment of it; but, upon the contrary, encouraged as well-doers, and advanced to office and public employment in the church without evident signs of repentance. And many other scandalous persons are daily connived at and superficially past, without sufficient discoveries of their repentance and amendment: Many also have been overlooked because of their eminency in the world, or past over for pecuniary mulcts. And, whereas, in the same first Article of the Solemn League, we are bound “to endeavour the promoting and propagating of the Reformation and uni-

formity of religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church-government (which as it was primarily understood, so still we own to be only Presbyterian) Directory for Worship and Catechising. According to the Scriptures."

Isa. xix. 18. "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of Hosts." Jer. xxxii. 39. "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them." Zech. xiv. 9. "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." Acts ii. 46. "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread, from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Acts iv. 32. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and one soul." 1 Cor. vii. 17. "But as God hath distributed to every man; as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk; and so ordain I in all churches." Gal. vi. 16. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." Phil. iii. 16. "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained; let us walk by the same rule; let us mind the same thing."

Yet as our fathers had reason to complain, "that the profane, loose, and insolent carriage of many in their armies, who went to the assistance of their brethren in England, and the tampering and unstraight dealings of some commissioners and others of our nation, in London, the Isle of Wight, and other places, had proved great lets to the work of reformation and settling of kirk government there, whereby error and schism in that land had been greatly increased, and sectaries hardened in their way;" so much more during the time of the late persecution, the offensive carriage of many who went to England is to be bewailed, who proved very stumbling to the sectarians there.

There hath been little zeal or endeavour for such a uniformity, little praying for it, or mourning over the obstructions of it; but, upon the contrary, a toleration was embraced, introductive of a sectarian multiformity of religion without a testimony against the toleration even of Popery itself, under the usurper James Duke of York; and since the Revolution the land hath done exceeding much to harden them. 1st, By accepting such persons to the royal dignity over this realm as had sworn to maintain the Antichristian hierarchy of Prelacy, with all the superstitions and ceremonies of the Church of England, and who countenance a multiformity in the worship of God and government of the church, and do not suppress such as are unsound and heterodox in the fundamental articles of the Christian

faith. And, next, to put a full stop to all endeavours of uniformity and union in the Lord's way, and to bring the nation under an indispensable necessity of covenant breaking, this nation hath entered into an *incorporating union* with England in such terms, and upon such conditions as formally and explicitly established Prelacy as the Church-government there to all succeeding generations; and that while, in the meantime, all manner of sectarian errors are there encouraged, maintained, and supported by means of a toleration. By the concluding of which union, this land hath said upon the matter that there is no obligation upon us to tender the advancement of religion in that nation, or to study such means and methods as might tend to bring them to a sense of their breach of covenant, or reduce them to a performance of the duties whereunto they are engaged; and thus this land hath hardened them in their sinful ways and courses, contrary to this Solemn League, and given them ground to think that we look upon the obligation thereof to be loosed. This land hath been wanting in compassion to them as brethren, in not labouring to show them their sin and danger, while persisting in a professed violation of their vows, and refusing them help in their need, when supplication was made by some of them to the first Assembly after the Revolution for ministers to preach the gospel. And though this land hath sought out methods how to entertain amity and friendship with them, yet have they not endeavoured to have it such as that the Lord should, upon that account, delight to dwell amongst us: nay, upon the contrary, unless these methods be repented of and forsaken, it is impossible that reformation should ever amount to that degree of perfection in these kingdoms, to which, through the mercy of God, it once arrived; so that instead of *living together in peace and love, we and our posterity after us*, are like to live in a joint defection from our covenant engagements made to the Most High God.

In the second Article of the Solemn League and Covenant, we swear, "That we shall, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresy, Schism, Profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness. And in the National Covenant to abhor and detest the Antichristian wicked Hierarchy," &c. According to the Scriptures.

Exod. xxiii. 32, 33. "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it surely will be a snare unto thee." Exod. xxxiv. 12, 13. "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But ye shall destroy their altars, break

their images, and cut down their groves." Deut. xiii. chapter throughout. Judges ii. 2. "And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; you shall throw down their altars," &c. Zech. xiii. 2, 3. "And it shall come to pass in that day saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the names of idols out of the land, and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him, shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord: and his father, and his mother, that begat him, shall thrust him through, when he prophesieth." 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils: Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron: Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe, and know the truth." Rev. xvii. 5. "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Verse 16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Compared with Rev. xviii. 4, 5, 6. "A I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double."

Yet, alas! so far has the land been defective in this, that upon the contrary, it hath been polluted with idolatrous masses; altars, and other monuments of idolatry were suffered again to be erected; the penal statutes were disabled, stopped, and suspended by an absolute arbitrary power by means of a toleration in its own nature tending, and in its design intending to introduce Popery and slavery, which yet was accepted and addressed for by many backslidden ministers, who to this day have made no public acknowledgment of the sin of so doing, notwithstanding all the reformation which is bragged of, and was countenanced, complied, and concurred with by many people without a testimony or endeavour to withstand it. Yea, the administration of the government and the greatest offices of power and trust were committed into, and permitted to abide in the hands of Papists; and the head of them and great pillar and promoter of Popery, James the VII, was owned as King, contrary to the laws of

God and man and covenant obligations, without respect of persons to extirpate Popery and Papists; and few during that time evinced any just zeal or indignation against, or fear of the manifest appearances of the coming in of Popery and intended establishment of it in the land. And not only then, but even to this day, there is too much conniving at Papists; the laws are not put in execution against them in their full extent and latitude: And albeit this land, yea, whole Britain and Ireland, were purged of Popery, yet cannot we be said to have made conscience of performing this part of the oath of God, while there is a confederating with Papists abroad and fighting in their quarrel, and that, whilst in the meantime they are persecuting, with the height of rigour and severity, all such as profess any thing of the reformed religion in their dominions. And as there hath been great failures in respect of extirpating Popery, so especially in the performance of that part of the covenant which binds us to the extirpation of Prelacy—"i. e. Church-government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other officers depending upon that hierarchy:" there hath been a most wilful and palpable violation of the oath of God, though it be most clearly our duty prescribed in his word.

Mat. xx. 25, 26. "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them: But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister." Luke xxii. 25, 26. "And he said unto them the Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them," &c. Acts xx. 17. "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." Compared with verse 28. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (bishops) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." 1 Peter v. 3. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage: but being ensamples to the flock." 3 John, verse 9. "I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not."

And these breaches of it were not only made during the times of persecution, when Charles the II. by an arbitrary power, granted him a parasitical Parliament, did overturn Presbyterian government, and introduce Prelacy, to which change the greatest part of the ministry did perfidiously yield, and became vassals to the bishops; such as were not willing to conform, were pressed to it by confinement, banishment, imprisonment, confiscation of goods, all manner of tortures, and, finally, death itself."

During which hour and power of darkness, many complied with the enemy, by taking oaths and bonds, indulgences, and toleration, and became so remiss in this matter, that it was all one to them which government had the ascendant, so they might enjoy their worldly accommodations. And not only then, while Satan was let loose in his members and emissaries to persecute and waste the Church of Christ, but since peace and quietness are obtained, this duty continues to be greatly slighted; yea, in place of extirpating Prelacy, have there not been courses taken effectually to establish it? To instance a few—the accepting of William and Mary, and after them the present possessor of the Crown, to be supreme Magistrates, while they are knownly and professedly Prelatical in their judgment, and engaged by oath at their coronation to maintain the same; the swearing oaths of allegiance to them without security for their preserving of the true reformed religion—yea, without any limitation or qualification whatsoever; as also, the taking an oath of abjuration, wherein, by consequence, the takers engage to do to the utmost of their power to procure that the Kings or Queens of these kingdoms shall be of the communion of the Prelatical Church, and so that they shall contribute to the support of Prelacy.

Again, the Episcopal Clergy who subjected to it during the time of its legal establishment, have not been therefore prosecuted by the discipline of the Church; but such as did, and yet do profess it as their principle, are allowed equal encouragement with the Presbyterians, only providing they evidence good affection to the civil government. And now, since the late *incorporating union* with England, we of this nation have consented that Prelacy shall be established there to all succeeding generations, (as was observed in the first article); and, moreover, have given into the hands of the Prelates in England, the power of making laws which must become binding upon this land, they being members of the British Parliament and council; which power has been already improved, to establish a liberty and protection for the whole rabble of the Episcopal Clergy in the free exercise of the Popish ceremonies of the Church of England, without any provision against the grossest heretical opinions that they please to broach, excepting only the denying of the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. Where, then, are our endeavours for the extirpation of the wicked hierarchy?—where is the abhorrence and detestation of it, sworn and engaged to in these Covenants?—Do not many who profess themselves to be Presbyterians show themselves so indifferent in this point, that they can join with either, as may suit their interest?—instance the Sacramental Testers. Few mourn over and pray earnestly for the subversion of that hierarchy. Few doctrinally discover the evils of

such a government, and how contrary it is to God's Word—or labour to bring their hearers into a dislike and detestation of it, and the sad fruits which result from it. Few study to convince others of the evil of such a principle, and following such a course by the Apostle's rule of avoiding all unnecessary company with them, that they may be ashamed; but, upon the contrary, many Presbyterians, by too familiar and unnecessary converse with them, encourage and harden them; and, particularly, ministers are to be blamed herein, who preach one half of the Lord's day in the church, and allow the curate the other half. Few impartially reprove and warn them of their sin and danger; but, upon the other hand, many professed Presbyterians, by their untender and unchristian walk and conversation, or by their lukewarmness and indifferency in Christ's matters, now called *moderation*, and by their walking contrary to covenant engagements, do exceedingly harden them in their evil way, and scandalize them at their duty. Instead of endeavours to extirpate superstition and heresy, as we are bound by the same article of the Solemn League, and by the "National Covenant to detest all superstition and heresy, without or against the Word of God, and doctrine of this reformed kirk, according to the Scripture."

Deut. xii. 30, 31, 32—"Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God; for every abomination to the Lord which he hateth, have they done unto their gods: for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it." Acts xvii. 22—"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mar's-hill, and said—Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." Gal. iv. 10—"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." Gal. v. 20—"Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies." Col. ii. 20—"Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world; why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? verse 21, Touch not, taste not, handle not: verse 23, Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." Tit. iii. 10—"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject."

Yet, in the darkness of the times of persecution, many dregs of Popish superstition were observed, many omens and freets too much looked to; Popish festival days—as Pasche, Yule, Fast-

ings—even, &c., have been kept by many; and Prelatical anniversary days, and festivities devised of their own heart, appointed for commemorating the King's and Queen's birth days, (as May 29th, October 13th, February 6th,) who were born as a scourge to this realm, were complied with by many. Yes, some have superstitiously made use of the Scriptures as a fortune book, looking to that which first cast up to them, or to impressions borne in upon their minds from such and such places of Scripture as Divine responses, without a due search of them as the Lord hath commanded. And many wavering and unstable souls have been seduced unto damnable and pernicious heresies, as Quakers, and delirious delusions, as those that followed John Gib. All which have been breaches of Covenant, as well as of Divine commands. Yea, even to this very day, the same superstitions are observed and practised, as abstaining from labouring upon the foresaid festivities, and observing presages of good or bad fortune (as it is called,) upon them and other times; as likewise, many practisers of enchantments, and users of charms—yea, such as are in actual compact with the devil, are not carefully sought out, nor accurately tried, in order to be brought to punishment, but overlooked and protected.

There has been also since the revolution, as well as before, a great deluge of errors through these covenanted lands, which, to this day, continue and increase. That might be sufficient to convince us that there have not been proper measures taken to suppress them, as this article obliges us to do;—nay, instead thereof, they are tolerated, maintained, and protected by authority, as appears both from the late Act of Parliament, and from the liberty allowed to that pestilent generation of Quakers, who keep their general meetings yearly in Edinburgh, being guarded by a company of the town guards. And as the state do not prosecute the promoters and abettors of these heresies with civil pains, as is the duty of such as call themselves God's vicegerents, and own themselves to be intrusted with keeping of both tables of the law; so the church is nothing speedier or more active in drawing out their ecclesiastical sword to cut off these luxuriant branches, and to *take the little foxes which spoil the vines*. Many whose duty, by virtue of their office, is to give warning from Zion's walls, as watchmen intrusted with the city of God, neglect to discover, and from the Scriptures to confute these errors, or to show their flocks by doctrine or writing the danger of being tainted with them. And, as suitable endeavours have been wanting effectually to extirpate heresy and error—so schism, its inseparable companion, and necessary consequent, has exceedingly grown and increased, to the great damage of the Church of Christ in these kingdoms, and utter subversion of that most pleasant fabric of uniformity in religion, which the League and

Covenant binds us to endeavour. The Word of God makes schism a very great sin, as is evident from

Rom. xvi. 17—"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." 1 Cor. xi. 18—"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you." 1 Cor. xii. 25—"That there should be no schism in the body: but that the members should have the same care one for another." Heb. x. 25—"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is," &c. Jude, ver. 19—"These be they who separate themselves, sensual; having not the Spirit."

And all the nation are to be reputed guilty of it who depart from the doctrine and laudable constitutions delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and adhered unto by the Church of Scotland in her purest times of reformation. And if we consider schism under this notion, as we ought to do, then will we find that the greatest part of the land is guilty of it. Few are firmly and constantly adhering to the attained reformation; but many upon the left hand have turned aside to compliance with Prelacy and Erastianism, and so have, by their defection, broken the church's *beauty* and *bands*, order and union, in making a faction repugnant to her established order, and censurable by all her standing acts, in bringing in novations in the government, and making a rent in the bowels of the church, by causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of the church; whereby they have made themselves guilty of schism, and some have fallen into delusions and dotages upon the right hand, who, in seeking to be religious above what is commanded, have come short of the truth of religion, and made a faction repugnant to this covenant. Some, being private persons, have pretended an immediate commission to preach the Word, and administer the sacraments; others, being stumbled with the defections of the time, have turned aside to independency. "Some, upon slender and insufficient grounds, have, and do separate, both from faithful ministers and christian societies and families, because of differences in judgment and incident debates, wherein the testimony of Christ is not much concerned; or because of personal offences easily removed, not observing the rules of Christ for removing of them—not having respect to his great commands of charity, forbearance, forgiving one another, or condescendency. And, among divided parties, which, in our day, have been long biting and devouring one another, there hath been too much both of sinful union and confederacy in terms prejudicial to truth; as our joining in the *Angus regiment* at the *Revolution*, and our guarding and supplicating that corrupt *Convention of Estates*, which consisted mostly of such as had been directly or indirectly

guilty of the murder of the Lord's people; and upon the other hand, there hath been too much of sinful heats, animosities, jealousies, pride, passion, and prejudice, grieving the Spirit of the Lord, and eating out the power and life, and much hindering the holy practice and spiritual exercise of religion."

We have been so far from endeavouring to extirpate profaneness, another evil engaged against in the covenant, and condemned in the Word of God. Deut. xxix. 19—"And it shall come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." Job xxi. 14—"Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Jer. xxiii. 15—"Therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts; concerning the prophets, behold I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth unto all the land." Ezek. xxii. 26—"Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them." Hos. iv. 1—"—— There is no truth nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land: verse 2, By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood: verse 3, Therefore shall the land mourn, —— &c." Heb. xii. 15—"Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right."

"That profanity hath been much winked at, and profane persons much countenanced, and many times employed, till iniquity and ungodliness have gone over the land like a flood; and profanity, beginning at the court, hath spread itself through every rank and quality in the land: so that immoralities and sins against every precept of both tables are greatly abounding." As, namely, great contempt of God and godliness, ignorance, atheism, and irreligion, unsuitable walking to the knowledge of him and his perfections which we have, and not labouring in the use of means to attain more. Much neglect of pressing after peace and reconciliation with him, through a Mediator, and of living up to the profession which we make of him. Despising of his holy ordinances and means of worship; deafness and stupidity under the calls of his Word. Profanation of his holy sacraments, neglect of secret prayer, (wherein much of the life of religion lies) and of prayer in families, or a negligent, careless, and superficial

performance thereof; many using a formality of words and expressions learned by custom. Some using our blessed Lord's prayer as a set form, which ought to be used as a rule of direction in all our prayers, and not as a dead form of words: many seeking more to be seen of men in this, and all other duties, than to approve themselves to God, and more careful to come by apposite words and expressions, when praying with others, than to attain and entertain the breathings and influences of the Spirit of God. Much neglect of propagating Christian knowledge in congregations and families; ministers and masters of families not making diligent search into the knowledge of the flocks and families under their charge, and instructing them suitably. Much swearing and profanation of God's name, by loose and vain oaths in common discourse: yea, swearing by the creatures—as, soul, faith, conscience, and the like, thereby sacrilegiously attributing to them divine honour; as also, by imposing upon all persons in any public trust the unlimited and unlawful oath of allegiance, together with the bond of assurance, and the oath of abjuration, contrary to the oath of the covenant, thereby debauching people's consciences, and involving them in the guilt of perjury. Great profanation of the holy Sabbath, and neglect or careless performance of the duties therein required; breaking it by unnecessary feasting, walking, idle, vain, and impertinent discourse, and such like recreations; yea, by hunting, hawking, riding, and going of journeys, sounding trumpets before their lords of Justiciary when going to church, reading of proclamations wholly irrelative to religion, and making publications not necessary nor expedient to be made upon that day. Much disobedience to parents, and undue carriage of persons of all ranks and relations, towards each other. Great murder and bloodshed, so that the land is defiled with blood, and that not only the blood of the Lord's people, who, in the times of persecution, were led forth like sheep to the slaughter, because of their adherence to their duty, and refusing conformity with wicked courses, and subjection to wicked laws, eversive of their covenant engagements, not yet mourned over, nor purged away by the blood of those that shed it; but likewise many through the land are murdered frequently, and the murderers are not prosecuted with due severity: nay, such are the methods that are now taken to embolden the wicked in that and all other crimes, that whatever presumptions of guilt may be had, or how ample confession soever be made, if it be extrajudicial, and the very fact not proved by witnesses, the delinquent is passed over and absolved as a well-doer, and many actually convicted of murder are indemnified and let pass unpunished.

Much uncleanness and filthiness, adultery, fornication, incest, bestiality, Sodomy, lasciviousness, promiscuous dancing, stage

plays, excessive drinking, vanity in apparel, and the like abominable unchastity and incentives to it. Much stealing, robbery, and oppression, grinding the faces of the poor by unjust taxations and heavy impositions, and by hindering the poor from begging, for the support of their lives in times of scarcity, by a wicked edict. Perverting of justice in law suits; lawyers and advocates finding means, for their own gain and worldly advantage, to obtain decisive sentences in favour of the rich, contrary to justice and equity; much cheating and deceiving in bargaining; forestalling of markets in times of scarcity; depriving the poor of their habitations and livelihoods, by building of parks and inclosures; tenants taking leases over their neighbour's head, and the like. It is moreover to be bewailed, that many ministers, who should be examples of charity and good works, are ring-leaders of sin and oppression. Much lying and bearing of false witness, defaming one another's good name, reproaching persons for their adherence to the truths and cause of Christ, or for discovering any piece of zeal and affection that way. Much covetousness and worldly-mindedness, repining, murmuring, and discontentment with God's dispensations; revenge, wrath, malice, envy, bitterness, and innumerable sins, both against the precepts of the moral law, and against the offers of Christ in the Gospel; which plainly says, that we have not used the endeavours which in this Article we promise, for, "Rooting up profaneness, and whatsoever is found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness, lest we partake of other men's sins, and so be in danger to receive of their plagues." Nay, hath not much unsound doctrine been maintained, in the arguments which have been used for defending the lawfulness of the courses of compliance with Prelacy and Erastianism? and these, amongst other unsound notions, have been entertained amongst us—"That lesser and circumstantial truths are not to be suffered for; that confession of these truths hath not been called for in our day; that people are not in hazard of the sins of others, especially of magistrates and ministers, if they do not directly act the same sins themselves; that sins of bypast times (if they be not presently practised,) are not to be confessed, nor the persons guilty to be stood at a distance from, till they give evident documents of their repentance;" contrary to express and plain Scripture.

2 Sam. xxi. 1—"Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year, and David inquired of the Lord; and the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." 2 Sam. xxiv. 17—"And David spake unto the Lord, when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand I pray thee be against me, and against my father's house." 2

Kings xxi. 11, 12—"Because Manasseh King of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah to sin also with his idols: therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, behold I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle." Isa. xliii. 27—"Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me: verse 28, Therefore I have profaned the Princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse and Israel to reproaches." Jer. xiv. 15—"Therefore, thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; by sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed: verse 16, And the people to whom they prophesy, shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem, because of the famine, and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them; them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them." Mic. iii. 11—"The heads thereof judge for reward; and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us: verse 12, Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."

Whence both ministers and people have been involved in the sins of Prelacy, Indulgence, Toleration, Erastianism, subjecting the government of the church to the secular and civil authority; while they thought these only to be the sins of Prelates, or of wicked and usurping rulers; they in the mean time yielding all the conformity with, submission unto, and approbation of them, that was by wicked laws required. On the other hand, many of us have rested too much in a non-compliance with these, and "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

In the third Article, whereas we are bound, "in our several vocations, mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of Parliaments, and liberties of the kingdoms;" meaning the true, real, and righteous privileges and liberties—consonant to the Word of God."

Deut. i. 13—"Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you." Deut. xvi. 18—"Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment." Isa. i. 26—"And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterwards thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."

Likeas, all lieges are bound by the laws of the land inserted in the National Covenant, to “maintain the authority of Parliaments, without which neither any laws nor lawful judicatories can be established.” Yet as our fathers had reason to complain, “that neither had the privileges of the Parliament, nor liberties of the subject been duly tendered; but some amongst them had laboured to put into the hands of the king an arbitrary and unlimited power destructive to both; and many of them had been accessary to those means and ways, whereby the freedom and privileges of Parliaments had been encroached upon, and the subjects oppressed in their consciences, persons, and estates;” so afterwards, all alongst the tract of tyranny and persecution, they had rather the name and show than the real power and privileges of lawfully constituted Parliaments; having advanced the royal prerogative to such a boundless pitch of arbitrariness, and being so corrupted; that faithful men, and honest and honourable patriots were excluded, and those admitted, who by the law of God and man should have been debarred; and so prelimited, that the members behoved to take such oaths (for instance, the declaration and test, abjuring and condemning the Covenants) as engaged them to be perjured and conjured enemies both to our religion and liberty, which both the electors of Members of Parliament and the elected, did sinfully comply with; neither did the body of the land make conscience of recovering these rights and privileges thus perverted and polluted; but in stupid subjection did own those for representatives, who betrayed their liberties, and made laws to enslave the nation, and entail slavery upon posterity. On the other hand, they that disowned them did not make conscience of preserving those rights and privileges of supreme judicatories, when inadvertently and unadvisedly they put in such expressions and stiles in some of their declarations, as do not belong to private persons, but only to such judicatories. And not only then, but since the Revolution, have there been many ways taken for corrupting and depriving the Members of Parliament; as that all members and electors of members have been obliged to take the oath of allegiance, with the assurance to such as did, and do, in their dominions, support Prelacy and exercise an Erastian supremacy over the Church of Christ.

And now, last of all, by the means of this fatal Union with England, in terms and upon conditions inconsistent with our covenanted union, engaged to in the League and Covenant; the nation’s sovereignty and independency are given up, the rights of Parliament entirely lost, or vanished into a shadow, little preferable to no Parliament; so few being to represent this nation in the Parliament of Great Britain, as can never be able to prevent, by their number of voices, any act which it

shall please the English to make, how destructive soever the same be to our sacred or civil concerns. Which treaty of Union was concluded in a Parliament as manifestly prelimited as any which ever was seen in Scotland; the members were corrupted with bribes and preferment, and so engaged to act contrary to the will and mind of those whom they did represent, and to comply with that stratagem hatched by the English for enslaving this poor nation, and denuding it of its privileges, as well sacred as civil. And, alas! how insignificant were the endeavours then used to prevent that course, and preserve the privileges of the Parliament and liberties of this kingdom? Only some faint addresses, all other attempts being laid aside at their Queen's command, by her proclamation, *as treasonable convocations of the lieges*.

Again, the subject's liberties, both as men and as Christians, which the Scriptures allow we should preserve—

1 Sam. xiv. 25. "And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? — So the people rescued Jonathan that day, that he died not." Acts xxii. 25. "And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the Centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned? Verse 28.—And Paul said, But I was free born." Acts xxv. 11. "But if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. Verse 16. It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. Verse 27. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him." Gal. v. 1. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

These liberties have been miserably encroached upon by arbitrary government, whereby the subjects have been oppressed in their consciences, persons, and estates, by all the oaths and bonds pressing conformity with the corruptions, novations, and usurpations in the government of church and state, and persecutions for recusancy, and by impositions on the freedom of secret thoughts which no law of man can reach, which yet in the time of the late persecution were extorted, by threatening of death and manifold tortures; the church's liberties have also been invaded by the ecclesiastical supremacy, declared by a blasphemous law inherent to the crown—which law, though it be not now in force, is yet still kept up in practice by the indiction, prorogation, and dissolution of assemblies, and prescribing diets and causes of fasting and thanksgiving in the Magistrate's name and authority, to which ecclesiastical supremacy, usurped by

the Magistrate, this blackslidden church hath always subjected, and now to discover to the world that they are not ashamed of this surrendering of our Lord's prerogatives to his enemies, they have, in their Assembly, holden at Edinburgh, Anno 1710, most explicitly and fully subscribed to this ecclesiastical supremacy, in their Act for observation of fasts, wherein they affirm, "that it is much for the honour of God that fasts, whether appointed by the church or the civil Magistrate, be duly observed."

In that same third Article, we are likewise bound to defend "The supreme Magistrate's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdom;" as in the National Covenant is expressed: Likewise, "to defend his person and authority, in the defence of Christ his evangel, liberties of our country, ministration of justice, and punishment of iniquity; and to stand to his defence in the defence of the true religion, liberties, and laws of the kingdom," as the duty is qualified in Scripture.

2 Sam. v. 3. "So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they annointed David king over Israel." 2 Kings xi. 17. "And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people." 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord, to burn incense. Verse 17. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men. Verse 18. And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense, go out of the sanctuary for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God. Verse 21. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the Lord, and Jonathan his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land." Rom. xiii. 3, 4. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil: wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good: for if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Verse 6. For, for this cause pay you tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." 1 Pet. ii. 13. "Submit yourselves to every ordi-

nance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme. Verse 14. Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well."

As our fathers in their acknowledgments had reason to say, "Neither hath it been our care to avoid these things which might harden the king in his evil way; but, upon the contrary, he hath not only been permitted, but many of us have been instrumental to make him exercise his power in many things tending to the prejudice of religion, and of the Covenant, and of the peace and safety of these kingdoms; which is so far from the right way of preserving his Majesty's person and authority, that it cannot but provoke the Lord against him unto the hazard of both. Nay, under a pretence of relieving and doing for the king, whilst he refuses to do what was necessary for the house of God, some have ranversed and violated most of all the Articles of the Covenant."

So, during the unhappy days of the late tyranny, it was the land's sin and shame, and ought to be our sorrow, that men were mounted upon a throne of iniquity, whose main design and practice was, to subvert religion and persecute it, to introduce Popery itself, and slavery, to destroy the nation's liberties, suppress the evangel, and oppress its professors; who enacted and executed manifest injustice, stopped the ministration of justice against idolaters, adulterers, murderers, and other malefactors, and punished equity and duty, instead of iniquity; arrogated and obtained a monstrous prerogative above all rights and privileges of Parliaments, all laws, all liberties; a power to tyrannize as they pleased without control. But, as it was their sin who inaugurated Charles II. after such discoveries of his hypocritical enmity to religion and liberty, upon his subscription of the Covenants, so when he burned and buried that Covenant, and degenerated into manifest tyranny, and had razed the very foundation upon which both his right to govern, and the people's allegiance were founded, and remitted the subjects' allegiance by annulling the bond of it: it was the land's sin that they continued still to own his authority when opposite to, and destructive of religion and liberty; and of those who appeared in arms at Pentland and Bothwell Bridge, that they put in his interest (with application of the words of the Covenant to him, though stated in opposition to it) into the *state of the quarrel*, in their *declaration of war*, for which (so far as the godly could discern) the Lord put them to shame, and went not forth with their armies. It was likewise the sin of the land, and a great breach of Covenant, that the Duke of York was admitted to the exercise of the royal office against the laws of God and man; being incapable of the Covenant qualifications

of a magistrate, and being a Papist, and so incapable of taking the “oath of coronation to maintain the true Protestant religion, and gain-stand and abolish Popery;” which, for the preservation of the true religion, laws, and liberties of this kingdom, is stated by the 8th Act of Parliament 1, King James VI. “That all kings, at the reception of their princely authority, shall take and swear;” yet this authority, though inconsistent with, and declaredly opposite to religion and liberty, was owned and upheld, by paying cess and supplies, expressly exacted for upholding tyranny in the destruction of religion and liberty; and though the Lord did, for a long time, by the tyranny of Charles II. and James VII., chastise these covenanted lands, yet there has not been a turning to him that smiteth: but these lands have again transgressed the Lord’s commandments, and broken this part of the Covenant of the Lord, by receiving, admitting; supporting, and subjecting to such, for Kings and Queens over these realms as want the qualifications required in God’s word, and enacted by the righteous and laudable laws of the land to be in magistrates, superior, and interior: which were not brought under Covenant ties and obligations, to be for God and religion in their own persons and families, and to advance and preserve the same allenary in their dominions; but in place thereof have come under oath and obligation to countenance, protect, and advance the Romish superstitions and innovations in the worship of God and government of the Church, which the Covenant binds these kingdoms to suppress and extirpate, and in consequence of, and conformity to, these obligations, do maintain and defend, or tolerate and allow Prelacy and Sectarian errors in their dominions, contrary to the true religion and sound doctrine, contrary to justice and equity; yea, contrary to that trust, especially committed to the hands of Christian Magistrates, who for that end have the sword given them, *That they may be a terror to evil doers*, preserve and defend the true religion and professors thereof, and punish and extirpate false religion and heresies, and bring the wheel over the broachers, maintainers, and abettors thereof; which did, and do exercise an Erastian supremacy over the Church, in proroguing and dissolving General Assemblies, appointing diets and causes of fasts and thanksgivings; and by their civil authority causing them to be kept and observed, which do not impartially execute justice upon all offenders, witness the frequent indemnities and remissions granted to murderers, as particularly the passing without punishment the persons which perpetrated the inhuman, barbarous, and lawless action of the Massacre of Glencoe: which waste and destroy the kingdom, by levying men and raising money for maintaining a long and expensive war, undertaken neither for the advancement of the true religion, nor for

the advantage and safety of the nation, but in favour of the house of Austria, which hath been, and yet continues to be, one of the strong pillars of Antichrist's kingdom, and implacable enemies to the true reformed religion, as appears by the persecution of the Protestants in Silesia, Hungary, &c. And yet notwithstanding of all this, many in the land of all ranks have sworn to bear true and faithful allegiance to them without any conditional restriction or limitation; so that it is not possible for them in a consistency with their oath to disown their authority, and deny them subjection, or refuse to defend their persons and government, albeit they should proceed to the greatest pitch of arbitrariness, which is very far from the defence promised to Magistrates in the Covenant. The whole land (almost) hath complied with them in all the forementioned particulars so diametrically opposite to the Covenants, and supported, strengthened, and encouraged them in these evil courses, by paying them cess and other subsidies; and ministers have minded so much to be loyal to their government, that they have forgotten to be faithful to their souls, in that they have not discovered to them the sin and danger of patronizing Prelacy, and exercising Erastianism over the Church; but in order to obtain their favour, have clapped their heads in these sins, which certainly is most opposite to that loyalty which we ought to maintain towards Princes, and tends rather to diminish their just power and greatness, than to increase and preserve it; and, instead of being a proper way of defending their persons and authority, is rather a mean to bring the wrath of a just and jealous God upon them, and those who defend or connive at them in these unlawful courses.

“Our own consciences within, and God's judgments upon us without, do convince us of the manifold, wilful, renewed breaches of the fourth Article, which concerneth the discovery of malignants, consonant to the Scriptures.”

2 Sam. xxiii. 6. “But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands.” Esther vii. 5, 6. “Then the King Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the Queen, Who is he? and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so? and Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.” Psal. xxvi. 5. “I have hated the congregation of evil doers: and will not sit with the wicked.” Psal. ci. 8. “I will early destroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all evil doers from the city of the Lord.” Prov. xxv. 5. “Take away the wicked from before the King, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.”

“For their crimes have not only been connived at, but dispensed with and pardoned, and themselves received into intimate

fellowship, intrusted with counsels, admitted into parliaments, and put in places of power and authority for managing the public affairs of the kingdom; whereby, in God's justice, they got at last into their hands the whole power and strength of the kingdom, both in judicatories and armies, and did employ the same unto the enacting and prosecuting an unlawful engagement in war against the kingdom of England, notwithstanding the dissent of many considerable members of parliament, who had given constant proof of their integrity in the cause from the beginning; of many faithful testimonies and free warnings of the servants of God; of the supplications of many synods, presbyteries, and shires; and the declaration of the General Assembly and their Commissioners to the contrary; which engagement, as it was the cause of much sin, so also of much misery and calamity unto this land, and held forth the grievousness of our sin, in complying with malignants in the greatness of our judgment, that we may be taught never to split again upon the same rock, upon which the Lord hath set so remarkable a beacon. And, after all that is come to pass unto us, because of this our trespass, and after that grace hath been showed unto *our fathers and us once and again* from the Lord our God, by breaking these men's yoke from off *their and our necks, and sometimes* delivering our fathers *so far from their insultings*, that he put them in a capacity to act for the good of religion, their own safety, and the peace and safety of the kingdoms, should they and we again break the commandment and covenant of the Lord, by joining once more with the people of these abominations, and taking unto our bosom these serpents which had formerly stung us almost unto death; this, as it would argue great madness and folly upon our part, so no doubt, if it be not avoided, will provoke the Lord against us, to consume us until there be no remnant nor escaping in the land? many times have we been warned of the sin of complying with malignants, both by faithful ministers, and fatherly corrections from the Lord;"—yet, after all these punishments, we have again joined with the people of these abominations; the Lord is righteous, for we remain yet escaped as it is this day; behold, we are before him in our trespass, we cannot stand before him because of this.

These incendiaries, malignants, and evil instruments, made many grievous encroachments, and prevailed much in the days of our fathers—but not without dissent, testimonies, warnings, and declarations; but more especially in the dismal days of persecution and tyranny, they were suffered, yea, encouraged, without any significant joint testimony, not only to hinder the reformation of religion, but to overturn the whole work of reformation, to burn and bury the covenants for it, to re-establish abjured Prelacy, erect a monstrous Christ-exauctorating and church-

enslaving supremacy, attempt the introduction of Popery and slavery at the gate of an anti-christian toleration, and to persecute and destroy the godly, who durst not in conscience comply with them; and not only to divide the *King from his people, or one of the kingdoms from another*—but first, to divide the bulk and body of both kingdoms, and make them pursue divided interests from the interest and cause of Christ, and then to divide the remnant of such as adhered to it amongst themselves, by indulgences and other bonds of contention, in order to get them more easily destroyed; and at length to engage the King into such a division from the people, as to make him, instead of their protector, their declared destroyer; and not only to *make parties among the people contrary to this league and covenant*, but to draw and divide the whole people into a party with perjuries. The generality, notwithstanding, did own allegiance to the head of these incendiaries and malignants, yea, a Popish incendiary, because he wore a crown on his head; and did pay the cess imposed for the maintenance and encouragement of malignants; many did associate with them in expeditions of war, drawing up with them in their musters and rendezvouses, thereby countenancing a malignant cause, and listing themselves under a malignant—yea, Popish banner; many subscribed and swore themselves contrary to the covenant by taking tests, oaths, and bonds, obliging them to surcease from covenanted duties, and to keep the peace and good behaviour with them, whom they were obliged by covenant to seek to bring to punishment; yea, some, and not a few, were inveigled in the snare of the oath of delation, to delate the persecuted people of God to their courts, and thereby made them (instead of discovering malignants according to the covenant,) to discover their brethren to malignants. And very many, almost the universality of the land, were involved in the snare of the oath of abjuration, renouncing the principle of declaring war against a malignant King, and of asserting the lawfulness of bringing his murdering accomplices and incendiaries to condign punishment; but, on the other hand, some of the suffering party did sometimes exceed the bounds of moderation in this matter, in usurping the sword without God's call, without respect to the rule, and against the scope of their own declarations, to take vengeance on them at their own hand; yea, even to that degree, of taking the lives of some of them in an extravagant manner;* for which, they were sadly rebuked of God,

* Such as the Curate of Carsphairn, and some others. But it is to be noted, that this sentence is not meant of those who either designed or actually executed that act of extraordinary justice upon the Archbishop of St. Andrews, who being an arch-traitor, and public incendiary, and implacable enemy to the work of God, and all the godly in the kingdom, was therefore justly put to death; though (because of the defect of justice in those that had authority,) the act, in respect of the persons executing, was singular and extraordinary. See the same vindicated, *Hind Let Loose*, head vi., page 633, &c.

and occasion was given and taken to reproach and blaspheme the way of God upon that account. But to descend to our own time, we have it to bewail, that whatever alteration there is in the face of affairs since the yoke of tyranny was taken off our neck, yet there is no alteration in this matter to the better, but rather to the worse; malignants are so far from being brought to condign punishment, that they are the whole administrators of the affairs of the kingdom; whence it is come to pass, that the supreme judicatories which should take trial of such and bring them to punishment, and to whom they should be delated, are wholly, or mostly composed of such; yea, none may now be reputed malignant unless he be disaffected to the civil government; so that malignancy is not now disaffection to the cause and work of God, but disaffection to the present establishment, and so far are they that are truly disaffected to Christ and his interest this day advanced and strengthened in their designs, that they have (so far as in them lies) put a final stop to all further progress in reformation in these covenanted kingdoms; so that instead of discovering and bringing to punishment those who make parties and factions against the League and Covenant; and reformation therein concerted, the most part of Britain and Ireland are nought else but a party and faction against it, who have cast it out of doors, and, for what is apparent, are never minded to receive it again; and, upon the contrary, such as are labouring to adhere most closely (though in weakness) to these engagements, and prosecute the ends of these covenants, are unjustly looked upon as a party and faction, and prosecuted as offenders by such as, according to the genuine sense of this Article, ought to be brought to condign punishment. It is likewise promised in this Article, that such *shall be brought to trial as shall divide the King from his people, or one of the kingdoms from another*, which clause hath been broken, by using endeavours to have King and people and the kingdoms all conjoined in a *union* and conjunction contrary to, and eversive of this Solemn League and Covenant; and those that go under the character of ministers, from whom it might in all reason be expected that they should interpose for having malignants duly punished, are so far from doing so, that they make it their endeavour to please them; and, upon the contrary, they spare no pains to incense the persons in the government against those whose design it is, in the Lord's strength, to adhere to their covenant engagements, and to keep themselves unspotted from the abominations of the times. We acknowledge also ourselves guilty of the breach of this Article, in so far as we have not more frequently and fervently, from a real respect and zeal to the glory of God, after we saw no means of getting such evil instruments and opposers of reformation punished and suppressed by human

judicatories, applied by prayer and supplication to God, that he would either of his infinite mercy convince them of, and reclaim them from, or in justice reprove and punish them for their opposition to his cause and interest. As also, that we have not duly searched into our own sins, and especially the malignancy of our own hearts: by means whereof, the Lord is highly provoked to permit such evil instruments not only to afflict and oppress us, but also to retard the success of his own work; and that we have not impartially and sincerely mourned over these sins in our own hearts and lives, which hinder our own personal, and so have influence to impede national reformation, and have not forsaken and abandoned them.

In the fifth Article, we are bound “according to our place and station, to endeavour that the kingdoms may remain conjoined in a most firm peace and union to all posterity, and that justice may be done upon the wilful opposers thereof.” According to

Isa. ii. 2, 3—“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. Isa. xix. 23, 24—In that day shall there be a high way out of Egypt to Assyria; and the Assyrians shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land. Jer. l. 4, 5—In those days and in that time saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward: saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. Ezek. xxxvii. 16, 17—Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick, and write upon it, for Joseph the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions, and join them one to another into one stick, and they shall become one in thine hand. Zech. ii. 11—And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people, &c. Zech. viii. 21, 22—And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Gal. v. 12—I would they were even cut off which trouble you.”

“ But though the peace and union of the kingdoms (while duly subordinate to the interest of religion,) was a great blessing of God unto both, and a bond which we are obliged to preserve inviolated, and to endeavour that justice may be done upon the wilful opposers thereof; yet some in this land who have come under the bond of the covenant, have made it their great study how to dissolve this union, and few or no endeavours have been used by any of us for punishing of such;” yea, very little or none at all have the most of us been concerned about this Article; whether there be peace with, or holiness and truth in the other kingdoms—or what sort of peace, or on what foundation it be settled, both kingdoms are mutually guilty of dissolving this covenanted union, in invading each other at several times, contrary to the covenant; the English nation in subjecting us to their conquest, and forcing us to a submission to their Sectarian usurpations on church and state; and this nation, in giving such provocations to them, by the unlawful engagement in the year 1648: by treating with, setting up, and entertaining the head of the malignant party, their enemy and ours both, as our King in the year 1650, and invading them upon his quarrel at the Worcester expedition, Anno 1651; since which time, after that kingdom and this both united in that unhappy course of restoring the King, without respect to the covenant, and re-establishing Prelacy, which broke our covenanted union and conjunction, that nation hath sometimes sent aid to our persecutors for suppressing our attempts to recover our religion and liberties; and this nation hath sent forces to help their destroyers, and to suppress their endeavours for the recovery of their privileges. And in the mean time, we have been very little solicitous for correspondence to settle union with such of them as owned the covenant, or for giving to, or receiving from them, mutual informations of our respective cases and conditions, under all our calamities and calumnies cast upon us; nor have we studied to keep up sympathy or communion of saints, or mutual bearing of one another’s burdens, as became covenanted brethren.

On the other hand, instead of union in truth and duty according to the bond of the covenant, a confederacy hath been studied in defection from the covenant, and a union and peace which wanted the foundation laid down in the foregoing Articles of the covenant, viz.—“ Uniformity in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against Popery, Prelacy, Schism, Sectarianism, for our religion, laws, and liberties, and discovering, suppressing, and punishing the enemies of these interests.” Such a union hath not been studied nor sought; but on the contrary, a union against the reformation and uniformity, for Prelacy and Sectarian multiformity, by maintaining tyranny and strength-

ening malignancy. Yea, by the means of this incorporating union, now of late established, Prelacy is not only strengthened and confirmed, but so settled as to continue to all succeeding generations, and this nation's slavery as well as their sin perpetuated. And persons of all ranks have had a deep hand in this trespass; the nobility and gentry who represented the nation, in surrendering their own and the nation's rights and privileges; ministers, in not warning them faithfully to beware of that covenant-breaking course, which could not but provoke God to anger against this poor island, but showing more concern in that juncture for settling their own than for securing and advancing Christ's interest; and the body of the land, in that they did not bestir themselves for the defence of their own liberties in a lawful way.

In the sixth Article we are bound, "according to our places and callings, in this common cause of religion, liberty, and peace, to assist and defend all those that enter into this League and Covenant, in the maintaining thereof. And in the National Covenant, in like manner, we are bound to stand to the mutual defence and assistance, every one of us of another, in the same cause, with our best counsel, our bodies, means, and whole power against all sorts of persons whatsoever; so that whatsoever shall be done to the least of us for that cause, should be taken as done to all of us in general, and to every one of us in particular." A duty very clear in the Scriptures:

Judges v. 23. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." 1 Chron. xii. 1. "Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close, because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war. Verse 18. Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers: for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them and made them captains of the band." Neh. iv. 14. "And I looked and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be ye not afraid of them: remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and daughters, your wives and your houses." Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain: if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

But, alas! how little conscience hath been made of this duty?

“ We have suffered many of our brethren in many parts of the land to be oppressed of the common enemy, without compassion or relief. There hath been great murmuring and repining because of expenses of means and pains in doing of our duty ;” and not only so, but many did swear and subscribe oaths and bonds expressly against such assistances, and to condemn all such endeavours, to assist, defend, or rescue them, as rebellion and sedition, and obliging them to assist their murdering malignant enemies, by such concurrences as they required. Yea, many instead of coming out to *help the Lord against the mighty*, and defending their brethren, did come out to the help of the mighty against the Lord, his cause, Covenant, and oppressed people, concurring in arms against them at all the appearances that were made and essayed for the cause of Christ ; compearing at courts, held for informing against and condemning their brethren that were present at, or concerned in such appearances for the Covenanted cause, and coming in as witnesses against them ; sitting in assizes for condemning them, and guarding them to their executions when martyred for their duty and the interest of truth. Many likewise denied to reset, harbour, or entertain their brethren, persecuted for maintaining the Covenanted Reformation : some raised the hue and cry after them, thereby occasioning, and assisting in the murder of several faithful brethren : the most part owned the great murderer who authorized all the rest, and enacted all these murders, and assisted him and his accomplices and executioners of his murdering mandates, with their persons and estates, in paying the supplies professedly demanded and declaredly imposed for enabling them to accomplish these mischiefs. Yea, many were so far from assisting, that they added afflictions to their afflicted brethren, their reproaches, and persecuting by the tongue those whom the Lord had smitten, and talking to the grief of those whom he had wounded. ‘ And all sorts of us have been wanting in our sympathy with, and endeavouring succour to our suffering brethren, let it be to deliver them from their enemies’ hands according to our capacity. So, also, it is for matter of lamentation, that many ministers all amongst discovered great unconcernedness with, and contempt of poor despised and reproached sufferers, condemned the heads of their suffering, forgot or refused to pray for them publickly. And as this Article was all amongst through the persecuting times, most grossly violated, so to this day it continues to be. Any that would appear in the least active for this cause, are so far from being assisted, that they are borne down, derided, sentenced, and sometimes imprisoned ; whatever motions are made in private discourses or public sermons which may import a respect to, or liking of this noble cause of religion, or a dislike of

and displacency with the courses opposite unto it, are so far from being countenanced, that the movers are hated, vilipended, contemned, or censured as raisers of dust, fomenters of division, pragmatic, turbulent, and factious spirits, and loaded with many other defamatory epithets and calumnies. Many instances of which may be given since the Revolution. For example, when in the year 1690, there was a paper of grievances presented to the Assembly by some of those who had been keeping up a witness against the iniquitous courses of the times, and were now expecting that as the fruit of a merciful delivery from tyrannical usurpations and Antichristian persecution, Reformation should be revived, grievances redressed, judicatories rightly constituted and duly purged, it was far from receiving a kind and friendly reception, and they who presented it left without assistance and help, contrary to the tenor of the Covenant, so that that paper could not be allowed a hearing let be a redress; and the persons who offered it to their consideration were, to their great sorrow and grief of heart, dismissed without a satisfying answer. As, also, when Messrs. Linning, Shields, and Boyd, who had been carrying on a testimony against the time's defections, and were now minded to join with the Assembly after the exhibition of their testimony, whatever acceptance it might meet with at their hands, had, in prosecution of this their design, exhibited their proposals to the Committee of Overtures, these proposals, though both worthy of consideration and necessary to be redressed, were not allowed a hearing in open Assembly, but rejected as being "made up of mistakes, reflections, unseasonable and impracticable overtures;" and the said persons, so far from being assisted, in order to a removal of the evils therein complained of as destructive to the cause of God, that upon the contrary the forenamed persons stand in the fifth Act of that pretended Assembly, characterized with the name and epithet of persons who had followed courses contrary to the order of the Church, and in their Moderator's exhortation *to walk orderly in time coming, in opposition to all schism and division*, their former practice of testifying against the corruptions of the times was implicitly condemned as disorderly, schismatic, and divisive. Another instance of this appeared not long after; when in the year 1692, some of the godly of the land published their declaration, disowning William and Mary's government, because not qualified as God's word, and our Covenants do require, as it is specified at large in the narrative of that declaration; some of them were apprehended and imprisoned for that piece of adherence to the Covenanted Reformation, and opposing, or at least witnessing against the courses which they found to be contrary to it. Yet, who at that juncture appeared to assist them in their laudable undertakings? And all amongst

since, whosoever has offered grievances, or any way witnessed against the bypast and present defections, have been and are prosecuted with church censure, or persecuted with bitter and malicious invectives and reproaches falling from the tongues and pens of those that are obliged by Covenant to have assisted, defended, and encouraged them. And especially ministers, who by virtue of their office, as well as covenant engagements, are obliged to excite persons to, and assist them in their duty, have been active to do the quite contrary; for instance, when some persons offered to give public satisfaction for their compliance with Christ's enemies, they refused to admit them. But, to what purpose do we repeat these instances? It is too certain and evident that there is more assistance and encouragement afforded to the enemies of this cause and Covenant, by persons of all ranks, than to the friends and well wishers of it. Love to and zeal for this cause are greatly decayed; and, therefore, mutual sympathy and affection amongst the people of God in the prosecution and maintenance of it are much wanting.

In the same Article we are bound, "not to suffer ourselves directly, nor indirectly, by whatsoever combination or terror, to be divided or withdrawn from this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary part, or to give ourselves to a detestable indifferency or neutrality in this cause: and in the National Covenant, that we shall neither directly, nor indirectly, suffer ourselves to be divided or withdrawn by whatsoever suggestion, allurements, or terror, from this blessed and loyal conjunction. According to Scripture warrants."

Gen. xiii. 8. "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren." Psalm cxxxiii. throughout. Zech. viii. 19. "Therefore, love the truth and peace." 1 Cor. i. 10. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." Eph. iv. 3. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Phil. i. 27. "That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." Phil. ii. 2. "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Heb. xii. 14. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness," &c. Jer. ix. 3. "But they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth." Ezek. xxii. 25. "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof." Hag. i. 2. "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." Phil. ii.

21. "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." 1 Tim. iv. 10. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Rev. iii. 15. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot."

But, alas! it is long since our fathers had reason to complain and confess, "That many in their day, through persuasion or terror, suffered themselves to be divided and withdrawn to make defection to the contrary part. Many had turned off to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in this cause, which so much concerneth the glory of God, and the good of these kingdoms; nay, many had made it their study to walk so as they might comply with all times, and all the revolutions thereof. That it was not their care to countenance, encourage, entrust, and employ, such only as from their hearts did affect and mind God's work; but the hearts of such many times had been discouraged, and their hands weakened, their sufferings neglected, and themselves slighted, and many who had been once open enemies, and always secret underminers, countenanced and employed; nay, even those who had been looked upon as incendiaries, and upon whom the Lord had set marks of desperate malignancy, falsehood, and deceit, were brought in as fit to manage public affairs."

All which sins and breaches of covenant have now increased to a great height of heinousness; for, in our day, these incendiaries, desperate and engrained malignants have only been employed in, and admitted to the management of, the affairs of the kingdom, and none but they accounted habile by law; and such divisions from this covenanted conjunction, and defections to the contrary part have been, and are enacted and established by law; yea, all the unhappy divisions that have been from the *public resolutions*, and downward, have been the woful consequents and effects of defections to the contrary part. At the first erection of Prelacy, many, both ministers and professors, partly by terror, partly by persuasion, did withdraw from this covenanted conjunction, and make defection into Prelacy, with which they combined, conforming with, and submitting to the ministry of the conforming curates; and afterward, by the terror of the fear of men, and the persuasions of their counsel and example, many of the land were seduced into a combination with malignants, in taking oaths and bonds contrary to the covenant, thereby dividing themselves from the recusants, and making defection to the party imposing them, and opposing the covenants. By combination of those that preferred peace to truth, and ease to duty—by the terror of threatened continuance of persecution, and the persuasion of a promised relaxation and immunity from troubles; many ministers have been divided from

the testimony of the Church of Scotland, against the encroaching supremacy and absolute power, and one from another, and have made defection to that part and party that were advancing these encroachments and usurpations on the prerogatives of Christ and privileges of his church; by receiving indulgences and tolerations from them, in their own nature destructive unto, and given and received on terms inconsistent with the duties of the covenants, which were contrived and conferred on purpose to divide them from this cause, and from their brethren that more tenaciously adhered to it; and did effectuate that design in a great measure—and others gave themselves to a detestable indifferency in complying with, conniving at, and not witnessing against these defections, but passing them over in a secure and submissive silence. And as, in the times of persecuting violence, these breaches of this Article were made by reason of the snares of that sinful time; so much more has there been a manifest violation of it since, when at this day there is such a universal combination of interests in opposition to the covenanted reformation. Are not the most of the three kingdoms in one great combination against it, by this cope-stone of defection, this incorporating union? How have we made conscience of performing that part of the covenant anent *resisting the persuasion of men to make defection to the contrary part*, when the whole land is so deeply involved in it? There has been, alas! too much way given to carnal arguments and persuasives—such as worldly gain, ease, profit, and preferment, and too much slavish fear and terror of men, whose breath is in their nostrils, has been entertained, without a due reliance and dependence upon Omnipotency; which has greatly carried men off their feet, and wheedled them into a compliance with, and defection to the contrary part, or into a neutrality and indifferency in this cause; so that few are found valiant for the truth upon the earth. What strange laxness and Laodicean indifferency has there appeared in this cause, through the whole conduct of affairs in church and state, since the revolution; whereby many discover to every observant eye that they are satisfied if they obtain a peaceful enjoyment of their own things, and liberty to dwell in their ceiled houses—albeit the Lord's house (in a great measure) lies waste? Where are there any acts of Assemblies, or proceedings of the church, which discover any due concern or zeal for the covenanted interest? Nay, the contrary has too frequently appeared; as for instance, when by the 5th act of the 2d session of William and Mary's 1st Parl., the establishment of the church was calculated for the meridian of state-policy, according to act 114, Parl. 12, King James VI. Anno 1592. On purpose to pass over in shameful oblivion the church's choicest attainments in reformation betwixt 1638 and 1649; and particularly, to make

void the League and Covenant, with the Assembly's explanatory declaration affixed to the National, the malignants' grand eyesore, there was no faithful protestation and testimony exhibited against this by the Assembly, then indicted, and convened the 16th of October following; which, if duly pondered in all its circumstances, without the mask and pretexts industriously drawn over it, will appear to be, perhaps, one of the greatest sins of this nation, and to be little inferior in nature and aggravations to the burning of the covenants, which is granted by all Presbyterians to be a most atrocious act of contempt done to the eternal God, and to his Son Jesus Christ, and cannot be called to mind by any of the godly without great abhorrence and detestation of it; in so far as the passing over and not ratifying these acts of Parliament and Assembly by the respective judicatories, which were made during that time of reformation, was a practical and interpretative condemning of them as unprofitable, and did greatly corroborate the acts whereby Charles II. had declared them null and not obligatory; and did likewise import a vilifying and despising of what God had wrought for his people in these lands; during that time; and, lastly, was a manifest indication of disregard to the oath of God, which these lands had come under. Neither did that, nor any succeeding Assembly, impartially and explicitly enumerate the land's sins in their national fasts; namely, the indulgence and toleration, with the addresses and thanksgivings for it, and the burning of the covenant, &c.; neither have they, in any of their addresses to their King or Queen, by letters, or other means, declared unto them the indispensable duty of renewing the covenants, nor applied to the Parliament for that effect; neither have they, by their Assembly-acts, asserted the intrinsic power of the church; neither did they in any of their acts, or public papers, make honourable mention of those who had laid down their lives for their adherence to Christ's truths during the times of persecution, nor testified their approbation of what was done that way; and yet many of us have been wanting in testifying our dislike of these backsliding courses, by discountenancing, withdrawing from, and keeping ourselves free of all participation with them; but have received the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the privilege of marriage at their hands, and paid tithes and stipends. By all which, it is apparent how much indifferency there has been in this cause of covenanted interest, which so much concerneth the glory of God, the good of the kingdoms, and the honour of the civil Magistrate.

Moreover, in the same Article, we are sworn "All the days of our lives, zealously and constantly to continue in this cause, against all lets and impediments whatsoever, and what we are not able ourselves to suppress and overcome, to reveal and make

known the same, that it may be timeously prevented. And, in the National Covenant, never to cast in any let that may stop or hinder any such resolution, as by common consent shall be found to conduce for so good ends; but, on the contrary, by all lawful means, to labour to further and promote the same; and if any such dangerous or divisive motion be made to us, by word or writ, that we and every one of us shall either suppress it, or, if need be, incontinent make the same known, that it may be timeously obviated. Agreeing very well with the Scriptures."

Numb. xiv. 9, 10. "Only rebel not ye against the Lord,, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones." Neh. vi. 3. "And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?"—See also the 6—8, 9, 10, and 11, verses. Isa. viii. 12, 13. "Say ye not a confederacy, to all them, to whom this people shall say a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." Verse 14. "And he shall be for a sanctuary," &c. Acts iv. 19. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Acts xx. 24. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy."——Acts xxi. 13. "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." Gal. ii. 5. "To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour: that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." Phil. i. 28. "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries."——

Nevertheless, *many have been the lets and impediments that have been cast in the way to retard and obstruct the Lord's work* by Prelacy, supremacy, indulgences, toleration, and absolute tyranny and compliance therewith, enacted by law and all the mischiefs established by a throne of iniquity since the unhappy restoration of Charles II. to this day. Yet few have ever zealously contended, and fewer have constantly continued in contending against these obstructions, so obstructive to the cause; many have kept secret the first motions and appearances of these things, while they might have been suppressed and overcome, and the generality have passed them over in silence, and not made known nor adverted unto the evil of these things when declared, by witnessing against these things when they could not be otherways removed or overcome. Yea, many of us have

ourselves cast in lets and impediments obstructive to the cause, by our defections, divisions, and disorders against common consent and precipitances, without common consent even of our brethren adhering to the testimony. Many a divisive motion hath not been counted dangerous, as those which tended to divide us from the covenanted cause. And many a good and necessary motion hath been accounted divisive, namely, such as proposed the necessity of confessing and forsaking sin.

“Besides these and many other breaches of the Articles of the Covenant, in the matter thereof, which concerneth every one of us, to search out and acknowledge before the Lord, as we could wish his wrath to be turned away from us, so have many of us failed exceedingly in the manner of following and pursuing the duties contained therein, not only seeking great things for ourselves, and mixing private interests, and ends concerning ourselves, and friends, and followers, with those things which concern the public good; but many times preferring such to the honour of God and good of his cause; and retarding God’s work until we might carry alongst with us our own interests and designs: it hath been our way to trust in the means, and to rely upon the arm of flesh for success, albeit the Lord hath many times made us meet with disappointments, and stained the pride of all our glory, by blasting every carnal confidence unto us. We have followed for the most part the counsels of flesh and blood, and walked more by the rules of policy than piety, and have hearkened more unto men than unto God.”

In the conclusion of the Solemn League and Covenant there is a profession and declaration “before God and the world of our unfeigned desires to be humbled (*a*) for our own sins and for the sins of these kingdoms (*b*); especially that we have not valued, as we ought, the inestimable benefit of the gospel (*c*), that we have not laboured for the purity (*d*) and power thereof (*e*), and that we have not endeavoured to receive Christ into our hearts (*f*), nor to walk worthy of him in our lives (*g*), which are the causes of other sins and transgressions so much abound-

(*a*) Ezek. vii. 16—But they that escape of them, shall escape, and shall be upon the mountains, like doves of the vallies, all of them mourning, every one for his iniquity.

(*b*) Ezek. ix. 4—Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

(*c*) Mat. xxii. 5—But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.

(*d*) 1 Tim. vi. 14—That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(*e*) 2 Tim. iii. 5—Having a form of godliness; but denying the power thereof.

(*f*) Eph. iii. 17—That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.—Col. ii. 6—As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

(*g*) Col. i. 10—That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.—

ing amongst us (*h*): all which we are under many obligations to confess and mourn over from the word; and, of our true and unfeigned purpose and desire, to endeavour for ourselves and all others under our power and charge (*i*), both in public and in private, in all duties (*k*) we owe to God and man, to amend our lives (*l*) and each one to go before another (*m*) in the example of a real reformation, that the Lord might turn away his wrath and heavy indignation (*n*), and establish these kingdoms in truth and peace (*o*). Yet we have refused to be reformed, and have walked proudly and obstinately before the Lord, not valuing his gospel, nor submitting ourselves unto the obedience thereof; not seeking after Christ, nor studying to honour him in the excellency of his person, nor to employ him in the virtue of his offices; not making conscience of the public ordinances; nor studying to edify one another in love. The ignorance of God and his Son Jesus Christ prevails exceedingly in the land." Even our fathers in their purest times confessed, in their acknowledgment of sins, "That the greatest part of masters of families among noblemen, barons, gentlemen, burgesses, and commons, neglected to seek God in their families, and to endeavour the reformation thereof. And albeit it had been much pressed, yet few of the nobles and great ones could be persuaded to perform family duties themselves in their own persons, which made so necessary a duty to be disregarded by persons of inferior rank."

We may add, in our degenerate times, not only the great ones generally profess the neglect and contempt of so necessary

(*h*) 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11, 12—Because they received not the love of the truth;—For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

(*i*) Josh. xxiv. 15—But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Gen. xviii. 19—For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.

(*k*) 1 Tim. iii. 15—That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.

(*l*) Psal. ci. 2—I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. Jer. vii. 3—Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways, and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Isa. i. 16, 17—Cease to do evil. Learn to do well.

(*m*) Jer. i. 8—Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be ye as the he-goats before the flocks.

(*n*) Zech. i. 3—Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. Psal. lxxxv. 3—Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger. Verse 4, Turn us O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease.

(*o*) Psal. lxxxv. 9, 10—Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Isa. xxxii. 17—And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever.

Zech. viii. 19—Therefore love the truth and peace.

a duty, both in their own persons and in the use of chaplains ; but the great part of the commons are altogether strangers to it ; many performing no part of family worship at all, others only singing a psalm and reading a chapter without praying, and others making a fashion of all, but very perfunctoriously, formally, and indifferently, and scarcely once in a day. And ministers also making little conscience of visiting families to see how this duty is performed, not pressing it upon the negligent, nor stirring up the formal to a more spiritual way of performing it, nay, some giving bad example to their flocks, by neglecting it themselves in their own families. *The nobility, gentry, and barons, who should be examples of sober walking unto others, are very generally ringleaders of excess and rioting.* We have been far from amending our lives and promoting a personal reformation, and going before one another in the example of a real reformation, when we have been examples of deformation in our personal practices and public transactions, and being too familiar and too far united with the patrons and patterns of the land's deformations. 'Our fathers also acknowledged, albeit they were the Lord's people engaged unto him in a solemn way ; yet they had not made it their study that judicatories and armies should consist of, and places of power and trust be filled with men of blameless and Christian conversation, and of known integrity and approved fidelity, affection, and zeal unto the cause of God. And not only those who were neutral and indifferent, but disaffected and malignant, and others who were profane and scandalous were intrusted. By which it came to pass that judicatories, **EVEN THEN**, were the seats of injustice and iniquity. And many in their armies, by miscarriages, became their plague unto the great prejudice of the cause of God, the great scandal of the gospel, and the great increase of looseness and profanity throughout all the land.' But, since the time of that acknowledgment, there has still been more and more degeneracy, so that judicatories have consisted of, and been filled with perjured traitors to God and their country. And armies made up of these plagues marshalled under a displayed banner against Christ and his interest, not only to the scandal, but for the suppression of the gospel, and forcing people to profanity throughout the land ; and now are, to the disgrace of the Protestant religion, made up of the refuse of the lands, and employed in the support of an Antichristian interest abroad. Yet have we not sighed and cried for these abominations, nor have we been concerned, as we ought, with the abounding of them through the land. As also, with blushing, we must confess our pride and presumptuous boasting of external privileges of the gospel and outward reformation, and of a testimony which we bragged of, as

if that had made us better than others, while we made no conscience of personal reformation, which, no doubt amongst other sinful miscarriages, was a main cause of the Lord's depriving us so long a time of the comfortable and soul-enriching mercy of a faithfully dispensed gospel.

“And, in like manner, the conceitedness of some in suffering and contending for truth, rather for keeping up the contention abetting a party, and many times under too lofty names of the suffering party, and remnant, and the like, than to keep and hold fast the word of the Lord's patience to his glory as our crown; and many other evidences of pride hateful to God, such as boasting in the strength of armies in the suffering times in an ostentatious way, vaunting of, and being too much taken up with them, though then necessary for the defence of our lives; rejoicing in our numerousness or worldly abilities, or in the number of them that frequent the public ordinances in the fields: or that they, who are owners of the testimony, are for the most part kept free from the gross out-breakings into which others are left to fall; which things, though very good and desirable in themselves, may yet be, and have been, occasions of sin when boasted in, more than humbly and thankfully acknowledged to be from the hand of God.” As also, revengeful resenting of affronts, passionate and disdainful refusing to take reproof for faults, or for the excess in any duty, as to the manner of it, when we thought the matter was right.

“And, it is likewise matter of regret, that both in the time of greatest suffering and afterwards, idleness of both kinds did too much prevail amongst us; both that when we were in a manner driven from the world, and shut up from all employments but the exercise of godliness, many did not improve that opportunity of the cross to promote acquaintance and communion with God, being slothful in prayer, reading, and other duties; and some again, even when they might have had access to lawful employments, continued idle and out of work, to the opening of the mouths of many against the cause; albeit they were not called to, or employed in any public business for the same.

And besides all these things, there may be many other transgressions whereof the lands wherein we live are guilty, and these attended with many heinous aggravating circumstances beyond what they were in our fathers, which we have not been humbled for to this day; but, instead of mourning for them, confessing and forsaking them, we have been rather defending or daubing, covering or colouring, excusing or extenuating them. All which we now desire to acknowledge and be humbled for, that the world may bear witness with us, that righteousness belongeth unto God, and shame and confusion of face to us, as appears this day.

A

SOLEMN ENGAGEMENT

TO THE

DUTIES CONTAINED IN OUR NATIONAL AND SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

Particularly adjusted to the Circumstances of these Times, Anno 1712.

BECAUSE it is requisite, in order to obtain mercy, not only to confess, but also to forsake our sins, and to do the contrary duties ; therefore, that the sincerity and reality of our repentance may appear, we resolve, and solemnly engage before God, in the strength and through the assistance of Christ, that we shall carefully endeavour, in all time coming, to avoid all these offences whereof we have now made solemn public acknowledgment, and all the snares and tentations tending thereunto ; and to testify this sincerity of our resolution, and that we may be the better enabled in the power of the Lord's might to perform the same we do again renew our covenants, both National and Solemn League, promising to make conscience of a more exact performance of all the duties therein contained, so far as we, in our station, and present deplorable circumstances, are capable ; particularly such as follow :—

Because religion is of all things the most excellent and precious in its own nature, and therefore most to be desired by the children of men, and the knowledge of the great truths of the Gospel, so generally decreased in this land, is so absolutely necessary to salvation ; therefore, in order to attain it, we shall labour to be better acquainted with the *written Word of God*, the only infallible rule of faith and manners ; and shall, according to our capacity, study more than formerly the doctrine of the Reformed Church of Scotland, summed up in our * Confes-

* Note. The Confession of Faith is here adhered to, as it was received and approved by the General Assembly of this church, by their Act of the 27th of August, 1647, Sess. 23, the 2d article of the 31st chap. being understood, as explained in that Act, and the 4th Sect. of the 23d chap. being understood, as it is explained in our Informatory Vindication, page 196, 2d Edition.

sion of Faith, Catechisms Larger and Shorter, Sum of Christian Doctrine, and Practical Use of Saving Knowledge, Directory for Worship (as the same was received and observed by this church in her purest times, viz., in the year 1649,) Propositions concerning Church Government, and Ordination of Ministers, annexed to the Confession of Faith, and other writings, clearing and confirming these truths, approved by this church, and agreeable to the Word of God.

We shall likewise endeavour the advancing and promoting the power of this true reformed religion, against all ungodliness and profanity, and the securing and preserving the purity thereof against all kind of errors, heresy, and schism; as namely, Independency, Brownism, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Arminianism, Socinianism, Libertinism, Familism, Scepticism, Quakerism, Deism, Burignonism, and Erastianism; and, as we declare, that we willingly agree in our consciences unto the doctrine of the Church of Scotland in all points, as unto God's undoubted truth and verity, grounded only upon his written Word; so we resolve constantly to adhere unto, maintain, and defend, profess, and confess, and (when called of God,) to yield ourselves sufferers for the said doctrine, as we shall desire to be approved and confessed by Jesus Christ, before God and his holy angels. *2dly*, We shall also study more sincerity, uprightness, and heart-integrity in the worship of God, and shall not satisfy ourselves with the form of it without the power and spirituality, which God, the alone object of religious worship, doth require; and shall endeavour the due performance of all the duties of religious worship which God hath in his most Holy Word required. And shall, if Providence offer occasion, endeavour to recover, and labour to preserve the purity thereof from all corruptions, mixtures, innovations, and inventions of men, Popish, Prelatical, or any other; and while we are not able, by reason of the prevailing power of the abettors and maintainers of them, to get them removed, we shall labour, through grace, to keep ourselves free from all sinful communion and participation with them, and shall, in our stations, testify against these corruptions and perversions of God's worship, by all competent means. *3dly*, We shall likewise, by all lawful means, endeavour, that Presbyterian church government in kirk-sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies, may be recovered in its former purity, established upon its proper basis and foundation, the Word of God; and that it may be freed from all encroachments and invasions made thereupon by the powers of the earth; and that the discipline of the church may be impartially exercised against all scandalous offenders, great or small; and when the ministers of this church, or any of them, shall sincerely and conscientiously endeavour the restoration of the

government in all its privileges, and freedom from all Erastian encroachments, and to have the discipline duly and impartially exercised, then we promise to be obedient and subject thereunto, as becomes the flock of Christ; but shall always testify our dislike of all encroachments made and yielded to, prejudicial to the privileges which Christ hath bestowed upon his church.

4thly, We shall always desire and pray for the reviving of the work of uniformity in the three kingdoms, and (if the Lord in his providence shall offer opportunity) shall seek and endeavour it by other means possible, lawful, expedient, and competent to us in our capacities; and shall never cordially consent unto, nor cease to testify against, whatsoever doth obstruct and hinder that work of uniformity, and shall detest and abhor all multiformity, introduced by Erastianism, Prelacy, and Sectarianism, now so prevalent, and confirmed by this late union with England.

According to the second Article, we shall do our utmost endeavour to have the land purged of Popish idolatry, and the monuments thereof destroyed, particularly the abomination of the mass; and, so far as lies in our power, shall never suffer the same to be re-introduced or erected again, nor favour any attempts tending thereunto. We shall never make any conjunction with these abominable Popish idolaters, at home or abroad, in armies or otherwise; and shall, according to our National Covenant, detest and abhor all their wicked superstitious rites and ceremonies. We shall never consent, for any reason whatsoever, that the Penal Statutes made against Papists should be annulled; but shall, when opportunity offers, be ready to concur in putting them to a due and vigorous execution.

2dly, We shall, by all approven means, in our stations and vocations, endeavour the extirpation of Prelacy; and shall never submit to that wicked hierarchy of Bishops, Archbishops, &c., having superiority of order and jurisdiction above preaching Presbyters, whether Erastian or only Diocesan, in any form or degree, howsoever reformed, accommodated, limited, or restricted by cautions and provisions of men; seeing that all such superiority is flatly condemned in the Word of God, and hath proven many times fatal to the church of Christ. We shall detest and abhor, and in our stations witness against whatsoever courses, tending to the establishment of that abominable hierarchy; and particularly, the oaths of allegiance, with the assurance, and oath of abjuration, lately imposed on the persons of public trust in these realms, in regard they may justly be interpreted to strengthen that hierarchy, by upholding the persons that maintain the same. We shall not submit to any orders issued forth by Bishops, nor own them as our lawgivers, nor acknowledge any title they have to be members of parliament or

council. *3dly*, We shall in like manner detest, and abhor, and labour, to extirpate all kinds of superstition—all rites and ceremonies superadded by human invention to the worship of God, not enjoined and required in his Word; together with all heresy and false doctrine, and all profaneness and immoralities of every kind, and whatsoever is contrary to sound religion; and shall in the strength, and through the help of Christ, endeavour to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and from henceforth to live righteously towards our neighbour, soberly in ourselves, and to walk humbly with our God.

We shall, upon the one hand, endeavour to keep ourselves, as far as we can, from all partaking in other men's sins, by consenting unto, association, incorporation, combination, compliance with, or conniving at, their sins. And, upon the other, to guard against all schism, and sinful separation, or unjust, rash, and disorderly withdrawing from societies, congregations, or families, or any part of the communion of the true Reformed Church of Scotland, holding purely and entirely the doctrine, worship, and discipline and government of the same, in principle and exercise, according to the rules of Christ, and standing acts and constitutions of this church, consonant thereunto, so far as the Lord gives light therein. And, as we look not upon our practice in withdrawing from the backslidden ministers of the present Erastian church, for reasons valid and sufficient, to be a gathering and setting up, formed separated churches under other ordinances and ministry, distinct from the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, (although we be falsely aspersed as doing it,) so we purpose and resolve always to adhere to that standard of doctrine, discipline, and government, and that purity and form of worship, which during our reforming times were established, and to embrace such ordinances and such a ministry as are of divine appointment; and that we shall not presume to withdraw from minister or member of that body, for any offence, in any case, where either the offence may be legally removed without withdrawing, or cannot be shown to be condemned by the Word of God and constitutions of this church; or is in itself an insufficient ground of withdrawing, or where it is not defended, or obstinately persisted in, or is a thing to be condescended upon, forborn, or forgiven; but shall study to maintain union and Christian communion, with all and every one, whether minister or private Christian, who adhere unto the purity of the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the Church of Scotland, and to the whole word of Christ's patience, in the sufferings and contendings of his people, in opposition to his enemies' encroachments; and shall join, in the way of truth and duty, with all who do, and in so far as they do, adhere to the institutions of Christ. And because many have laboured to

supplant the liberties of the true kirk, and have, in a great measure, of late, by indulgences and tolerations, and now by oaths of allegiance and abjuration, and encroaching on the freedom of Christ's courts, obtained their design; we shall, therefore, to our power, withstand and witness against all these encroachments made upon the liberties of Christ's church in our land, and when we can do no more, shall withdraw our countenance and concurrence from such as hold their freedom from, and are modified by such usurpations; and shall neither hear their sermons, nor pay them stipends, while they continue unfaithful; and shall, whenever God gives us opportunity, endeavour to recover, and when recovered, to maintain and defend the liberties and privileges of the Church of Scotland against all who shall oppose or undermine the same, or encroach thereupon, under any pretext whatsoever.

With reference to the third Article, wherein we are bound to defend the privileges of Parliament, liberties of the kingdoms, and the King's Majesty's person and authority, in the defence of the true reformed religion; albeit God, in his righteous judgment, hath left the nations so far to the counsels of their own hearts, as to suffer them to set up Magistrates wanting the qualifications requisite, and to fill places of power and trust with insufficient and disaffected persons, who have no respect to the interest of religion, and this nation in particular, to give up the rights and privileges of Parliament and kingdom, to the will and lust of the English nation, and so to betray the interest both of religion and civil liberty for unworthy by-ends; yet, we purpose and promise that we shall always, in our capacities, bear witness against these courses, and shall not by any means corroborate them, or encourage and countenance the maintainers and abettors of them. And if ever the Lord in his mercy shall be pleased to open a door of relief, and break the cords of the ungodly, we shall not be wanting in all lawful and suitable endeavours to promote, to our power, the recovery of that liberty and freedom which we have lost, and to have those acts and oaths which impede reformation rescinded; and that all the righteous laws made in favour of the Covenanted Reformation may be put in full force, and duly executed.

We shall earnestly pray to God that he would give us able men, men of truth, fearing God and hating covetousness, to bear charge over his people, and that all places of power and trust in church, state, or army, may consist of, and be filled with men of known good affection to the cause of God, and of a Christian and blameless conversation; and when it shall please the Lord to give us such magistrates and judges supreme and subordinate, then we will, in the terms of the covenant, yield allegiance to them, and loyally subject to their good government, not from

any by-end or sinistrous principle, but out of sincere obedience to God's commandment; and shall willingly support and defend them, with our estates and lives, in their preserving and defending the true reformed Protestant religion, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, and suppressing all kinds of false religion in their dominions, and in the administration of justice, and punishment of iniquity; but while the Lord, in his just displeasure for our sins, withholds such from us, we intend to wait till he turn away his anger, and not to stretch forth our hands to iniquity, in owning and countenancing such as are not duly qualified; as, particularly, those that are Popish or Prelatical in their professed principle and practice, and by oaths engage themselves to maintain, and accordingly to defend, the Prelatical form of church government, who oppose and encroach upon the true government of Christ's house by their supremacy, and tolerate Sectarian errors in their dominions, and that every one of them supreme and subordinate; and shall not corroborate their unjust authority, by paying them cess and supply, for upholding their corrupt courts and armies, employed in an unjust and anti-christian quarrel; or, by compearing before their judicatories, either to defend or pursue law suits, or upon any other account.

Because we are not in a case to bring to due trial and punishment, condign, according to the merit of their offences, malignants and evil instruments, according to the fourth Article; therefore, we shall endeavour to keep ourselves, as far as possible, from any compliance with, or approbation of their cause and courses, opposite to the cause and work of God; and shall endeavour to keep at a distance from every thing that may any ways import a unitive conjunction, association, or confederacy with them, or strengthening them in their opposition to the cause of God—the covenanted interest. We shall, through grace, endeavour to represent before the throne of justice their wicked courses; and pray that God would defeat their inventions, though we shall always, as becomes Christians, implore the throne of grace for mercy to their souls, so far as it may be consistent with God's eternal purpose of electing love. Moreover, we shall always endeavour to guard against all unwarrantable and irregular ways, not approved in God's Word, of punishing malignants and incendiaries, for their opposition to reformation.

Whereas, in the fifth Article, we are bound to endeavour, that the kingdoms may remain united in a most firm peace and union to all posterity; which union did consist in a uniformity in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, though, as was said, it is now laid aside, and a union entered into which establishes multiformity therein, and so is the opposite of this Covenanted Union. We shall, therefore, deny our consent unto,

and approbation of this union, and shall, as we have in weakness been witnessing against it formerly, so continue to do for the future, and shall not corroborate or strengthen the same; but, upon the contrary, if the Lord afford opportunity, shall do our utmost to have the *union of the kingdoms settled* upon the true covenanted basis; and shall lay out ourselves, as far as possible, to entertain correspondence and sympathy with every one in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, who do, or shall, to our knowledge, adhere to this League and Covenant.

According to the sixth Article, considering what danger we and all our brethren, under the bond and owning the obligation of these covenants, are in, and may be exposed unto, from the Popish and Prelatical malignant faction still prevailing, and from this backslidden church; and being sensible of the many defects which have been amongst us, in the duty of defending and assisting one another in maintaining the common cause of religion and liberty, we do here solemnly enter into a bond of association with all that do now renew these covenants, “with the Acknowledgment of the Public Sins and Breaches, and the Engagement to Duties thereof, and concert and assert the old covenanted cause and quarrel,” as our fathers stated and contended for it, from the year 1638 to the year 1650. Which cause of the covenanted reformation in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, and all interests, or rights, religious or civil, contended for during the foresaid space of years, conducing to promote the same, we faithfully promise to prosecute, propagate, preserve, and maintain, to the utmost of our power; with our lives and all that we have; and to adhere to all the faithful testimonies, protestations, and declarations, in the defence of the foresaid covenanted reformation, agreeable to, and founded on God’s Word, ever since the foresaid year 1650, not regarding the foul aspersions of rebellion, combination, or schism, or what else our adversaries, from their craft and malice, would put upon us; seeing what we do is so well warranted, and ariseth from an unfeigned desire to maintain the true religion, to obtain the protection and preserve the honour of righteous government, and promote the peace and happiness of the kingdoms.

And for the better performance of what we here engage to, we shall sympathize, bear all burdens, embark our interest with, assist and defend all those who enter into, or join with this association and covenant, and shall reckon whatsoever is done to the least of us for this cause, as done to us all in general, and to every one of us in particular; and shall account it a breach of covenant, if, seeing our brethren pursued for this cause, and having sufficient means to comfort and assist them, any of us shall either make peace with the persecutors, bind up their hands by oaths and bonds from resisting them, refuse to hide, harbour,

or supply their brethren, decline to venture, in lawful and necessary attempts for their relief, or withdraw from their dutiful support; and, being thus united and associated in this cause, as we resolve and oblige ourselves to abide in this firm conjunction, and neither consent nor concede to any combination or counsel, suggestion, persuasion, allurements, or terror, that may have any known tendency or influence, whether direct or indirect, to seduce us either to division amongst ourselves, or defection to our adversaries, or a base indifferency and neutrality between the two; but shall, with all zeal, fidelity, and constancy, communicate our best help, counsel, and concurrence, for promoting all resolutions, which, by common consent, shall be found to conduce to the good of the cause, and shall endeavour to discover, oppose, and suppress, all contrivances or counsels that may cast in any let or impediment that may be obstructive or prejudicial to the same. So we shall likewise desire, design, and endeavour, (whenever the Lord in his providence shall offer opportunity,) to get the defections, unworthy neutralities, and unhappy divisions, which have long and lamentably wounded and wrecked this church, removed and remedied. And shall be willing, with all tender sympathy and compassion, to embrace and welcome, with the utmost bowels of kindness and respect that we can, all who shall confess and forsake these defections; and, according to their stations as ministers, or private Christians, shall, by all proper means, labour to satisfy the consciences of the godly that are through these defections and scandals justly offended, and that according to the rules of Christ delivered in his Word, and received in his church, in her reforming times, and join cordially with us in the prosecution of this cause; and we shall be willing, also at their desire, to acknowledge and forsake, for peace and unity, whatever we can rationally be convinced to be bad in our conduct and management, as we must acknowledge, that in all things we fail and come exceedingly short of that perfection which we should and would be at.

And because there be many who heretofore have not made conscience of the oath of God—but some, through fear, others by persuasion, and upon base ends, and human interests, have entered thereinto, who have afterwards discovered themselves to have dealt deceitfully with the Lord, in swearing falsely by his name; therefore, we, who do now renew our covenants with reference to these duties, and all other duties contained therein, do, in the sight of Him who is the searcher of hearts, solemnly profess, that it is not upon any politic advantage, or private interest, or by-end, or because of any terror or persuasion from men, or hypocritically or deceitfully, that we do again take upon us the oath of God; but honestly and sincerely, and from the sense of our duty. And that, therefore, denying ourselves and

our own things, and, laying aside all self-interests and ends, we shall, above all things, seek the honour of God, the good of his cause, and the wealth of his people; and that, forsaking the counsels of flesh and blood, and not leaning upon carnal confidences, we shall depend upon the Lord, walk by the rule of his Word, and hearken to the voice of his servants. In all which, professing our own weakness, we do earnestly pray to God who is the Father of mercies, through his Son JESUS CHRIST, to be merciful unto us, and to enable us, by the power of his might, that we may do our duty, unto the praise of his grace in the churches. Amen.

II.

A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

OLD PRESBYTERIAN DISSENTERS,

UNDER THE INSPECTION OF

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIES OF

SCOTLAND, IRELAND, AND NORTH AMERICA.

COMPREHENDING ALSO,

AN ABSTRACT OF THEIR PRINCIPLES,

INTENDED AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE

PERUSAL OF THEIR JUDICIAL TESTIMONY,

AND OTHER LARGER WORKS.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERY IN SCOTLAND.

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE FORMER THREE DISSENTING

AND REVEREND BISHOPS OF

SOUTHERN IRELAND AND NORTH AMERICA

AN ABSTRACT OF THEIR PRINCIPLES

AND THE VIEWS WHICH THEY HOLD

SHORT ACCOUNT,

&c.

SECTION I.

THE SEVERAL NAMES BY WHICH THE OLD DISSENTERS HAVE
BEEN KNOWN AND DISTINGUISHED.

THE Old Presbyterian Dissenters have assumed, and received, the appellation of **DISSENTERS**, on account of the part which their forefathers acted at the revolution, in 1689, while they openly and candidly dissented from the public deeds of the nation's representatives, in both church and state; considering these deeds as involving a mournful departure from former laudable attainments. The epithet **OLD** has ordinarily been prefixed, to signify that they are of longer standing, as a distinct Body, than any other denomination of Presbyterians who have separated from the Established Church. In some parts of the country, especially in Ireland, they have been called **COVENANTERS**, because of their avowed attachment to the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms.

Various nick-names are frequently given to them by others. They have been called **WHIGS**—a term which, it is well known, has often been applied to the zealous friends of civil or religious liberty. **CAMERONIANS**—from the Rev. Richard Cameron, who fell at Airmoss, in Kyle, on the 20th of July, 1680, by the sword of his bloody persecutors, while he, and a number of his followers, being suddenly and furiously attacked, were nobly defending their lives and religious liberties. **MOUNTAIN-MEN**—on account of their adhering to the same cause with those who supported and countenanced the faithful preaching of the Gospel on the mountains and moors of Scotland during the persecution; and because they themselves, in want of better

conveniency, have often been obliged, even since the revolution, to administer ordinances in the open fields, though this is not so much the case now as it once was. M'MILLANITES—from the name of the first minister who espoused their cause after the revolution, and whose immediate descendants of the second and third generation, are yet employed in ministering among them. Were the intention of the imposer good, all these nick-names might be considered as very harmless.

There is, however, one very forbidding epithet, viz., ANTI-GOVERNMENT-PEOPLE, which some have bestowed on the Dissenters; but which they justly reject with abhorrence, in as much as they firmly believe, and have also repeatedly shown from the press, that it is totally inapplicable to them; unless, indeed, it be either from gross ignorance of their avowed principles, or from pure malice, wishing to make them as obnoxious before the world as possible, it is difficult to conceive how this term could ever be applied to the Old Dissenters. So far are they from being unfriendly to civil government amongst men, that they have uniformly and strenuously contended that it is a precious ordinance instituted by the Great Creator of heaven and earth, and comprehended in the revelation of his will; in which the ends of it are evidently declared to be his own glory, the external protection of his church, where the true religion is known and professed, and the good of mankind at large. Nor do Dissenters object to the particular kind of civil government adopted in our own country, viz., a mixed monarchy. The great matters on which their scruples turn, are the terms or fundamental conditions on which persons are admitted into places of power and trust in the nation. Could they, in judgment and conscience, approve of these, an idea necessarily implied in owning any government, so long as language retains its usual meaning; did they find these terms of advancement agreeable to the revealed will of God, which they consider as the standard of human conduct, in civil as well as in religious society; and could they once be persuaded in their own minds that they are consistent with the fundamental laws of the kingdom, in the purest times of that reformation, unto which they still wish to adhere; instead of differing from the other inhabitants of Britain, concerning their acknowledgments of the present government, they would find a peculiar pleasure in concurring with them. But plainly perceiving that the revolution terms of advancement to power are of a very different description, the Old Dissenters cannot in judgment approve; but find themselves, indeed, under the disagreeable necessity of openly entering their protest against national backsliding, whether it be in church or state. Doing so, they consider themselves as proceeding on the great and generally admitted principle, that human society is formed by

mutual consent, and not by compulsion, or by one party lording it over another. If this be the case, Dissenters cannot consistently be refused the privilege of openly avowing their satisfaction with the fundamental laws of that great national society, to which, in the person of their worthy ancestors, they heartily gave their consent, and to which they still adhere in their own persons; neither can they be justly blamed, after using the best means of information in their power, for allowing the dictates of their own mind, under the direction of a higher rule, in dissenting from the deeds of those, who, at the revolution, receded from the former laudable attainments, and re-organized the society on principles entirely different.

But let it always be carefully observed, that after publicly entering their dissent from the revolution-settlement of church and state, and candidly assigning their reasons, it ever hath been, and they trust ever shall be, the study of the Old Dissenters, to live peaceably and inoffensively, without giving disturbance to small or great. Nor do they wish this to be admitted on their bare assertion; let stubborn facts bear witness; let their conduct undergo the severest investigation for a hundred years back, and it will be found that in no rebellions, seditions, or public disturbances of any kind have they ever had a share, or taken any active part. They never entertained the idea of either opposing public measures, or propagating their own principles, by violence—nor had they ever the remotest thought of injuring either the person or the property of any man, high or low, rich or poor, however far he may differ from them in his opinions; on the contrary, they sincerely wish, by every consistent mean in their power, to promote the peace and happiness of human society, wherever providence may order their lot. With what shadow, then, of either reason or candour, they may still be called the **ANTI-GOVERNMENT-PEOPLE**, the impartial public shall be left to judge.

SECTION II.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE OLD DISSENTERS.

As the Dissenters hold no new opinions with respect to either civil or religious matters, it is obvious that they cannot, with any propriety, be denominated a sectary, or new upstart society. If we carefully consider the well authenticated histories of our memorable reformation, from 1638 to 1649; if we examine the printed acts of Assembly during that period, and also the acts of Parliament, fixing the conditions of civil rule in the nation; if we candidly peruse the subordinate standards of the Church

of Scotland, adopted at that time as parts of the covenanted uniformity for the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland; if we peruse also the Informatory Vindication, Cloud of Witnesses, Plain Reasons, and other books of a similar description, and compare with all these, the Judicial Testimony of the Reformed Presbytery, the native conclusion will be, that the origin of the Old Presbyterian Dissenters, under the inspection of said Presbytery, may be safely traced to the Reformed and Covenanted Church of Scotland when she looked forth fair as the morning, at the year 1649. The Old Dissenters evidently stand on the same ground with that famous church, though they must confess themselves the unworthy descendants of such noble ancestors.

From the begun decline in 1650, to the restoration of Charles II. in 1660, the dismal clouds of Cromwell's usurpation, enthusiastic independency, and public resolutions, together with sinfully qualified tolerations and indulgences, rendered it extremely difficult to recognize the faithful witnesses for the preceding reformation attainments; yet, even during that period, there was a considerable number whose unextinguished zeal for the reformation influenced them to stand boldly forward and display a banner for the truth. This necessary duty was performed by solemn remonstrances and protestations against the public resolutions, and other backslidings of the time.

From the restoration to the year 1688, when the revolution took place, comprehending the twenty-eight years of the most inhuman and bloody persecution, the church's testimony for the word of Christ's patience, was honourably supported by the faithful preaching of the Gospel in the fields, after those ministers who honestly avowed their attachment to the former reformation had been silenced, by public authority, and ejected from their parish churches; by solemn declarations and testimonies openly exhibited against the prevailing abominations of the time; by the sufferers' Informatory Vindication, in connexion with Mr. Shield's Hind Let Loose, and the Rev. Mr. Renwick's Testimony against toleration, given in to some ministers in Edinburgh a short while before his death; and by the earnest contendings and dying speeches of the martyrs who sealed their stedfast adherence to the truths of Christ with their blood, shed on the scaffolds and on the high places of the field.

From this noble race of martyrs, the line of succession was still preserved at the memorable revolution in 1688. The last ordained minister, who, previous to this period, had gone out and in before them, saying, in his Master's name, "This is the way, walk ye in it," was the fore-mentioned Rev. James Renwick, who suffered at the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, Feb. 17th, 1688. After his death, Mr. Alexander Shields, author of the

Hind Let Loose, &c., and a preacher, who had laboured a considerable time along with Mr. Renwick, in supporting the same testimony, continued to preach among the people who had lately lost their young champion and much beloved pastor.

While matters were in this situation, a Mr. Thomas Linning, who had been formerly sent over to Holland for finishing his education and receiving ordination, came home to Scotland; he, together with a Mr. William Boyd, who had also lately come from Holland, joined with Mr. Shields. These three together administered Gospel ordinances for a few months longer, and renewed the covenants at Lesmahago, amongst the poor afflicted people above-mentioned; but when the General Assembly met at Edinburgh, in 1689, the three ministers, deserting their former flock, and relinquishing, in many respects at least, their former principles, gave in their accession to the judicatories of the revolution church. Thus, the people who wished closely to adhere to the reformation attainments were left as sheep without a shepherd.

Having long before this time formed themselves into praying societies, they still continued these; and had, at particular times, a general correspondence of all the societies together, in order to ascertain the state of matters through the body at large, and to cultivate a closer acquaintance with one another. In this very trying and rather singular situation, without any change of sentiment, they steadfastly adhered to the very same principles which were openly espoused and solemnly ratified by the Covenanted Church of Scotland in the times of her purest reformation, as can be clearly and fully proved from their written deeds and declarations.

Thus they remained for about the space of sixteen years, till, in 1706, the Rev. John M'Millan, formerly minister of Balmaghie, in Galloway, having previously to this left the Established Church, acceded to them and espoused their cause. Receiving a unanimous call to be their minister, he took the pastoral charge of them, and laboured amongst them for many years after with much acceptance, as hundreds of respectable characters have attested both before and since his death.

After Mr. M'Millan had laboured long by himself, he and his people at last received the accession of the Rev. Thomas Nairn, who had been in connexion with the Secession Church; but, for reasons which were published to the world, had dissented from them. Mr. M'Millan and he, with some ruling elders who had been regularly ordained before, and who held the same principles, formed and constituted a Presbytery, in the name of Christ the alone King and Head of his church, on the 1st of August, 1743, under the title of THE REFORMED PRESBYTERY. This title it still bears, not that they consider themselves as any

better than other men, or as having, in their own persons, arrived at higher degrees of perfection—such thoughts they never entertained; but purely for this reason, that it is at least their honest intention, faithfully to adhere to the whole of our reformation attainments in both church and state, without knowingly dropping any part of these. On this account, it is presumed they may, justly enough, be called the REFORMED, or REFORMATION PRESBYTERY; while, in another point of view, they might, with equal propriety, be denominated the DISSENTING PRESBYTERY.

A Mr. Alexander Marshal, who had formerly got the ordinary education of regular students in divinity, having passed the usual pieces of trial, with approbation, before the Reformed Presbytery, was by them licensed to preach the Gospel, in the month of April 1744. He soon after received a call, was regularly ordained, and took his seat with the other two as a copresbyter. After this, the Reformed Presbytery, from time to time, received small accessions to the number of both their ministers and people. Having obtained help of God, they continue to this day, witnessing none other things than what many thousands, in the once famous and Reformed Church of Scotland, have witnessed before them.

SECTION III.

CONCERNING THE DECEASED MR. M'MILLAN'S COMING OFF FROM THE REVOLUTION CHURCH.

No sooner was the Rev. John M'Millan ordained to the holy ministry, in the parish of Balmaghie, in Galloway, Sept. 1701, and had entered on the discharge of the important duties belonging to his office, than he began to discover a strong attachment to reformation principles. Accordingly, he and other two members of the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, so early as in the month of July, 1703, after having used other means more privately for exciting their brethren unto their duty, drew up, and presented to said Presbytery a paper of grievances—craving, amongst other things, that some effectual measures should be taken for reviving the remembrance of the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms; explicitly asserting the divine right of Presbytery—openly avowing Christ's sole headship over his church, together with her intrinsic liberties—and for impartially stating and mourning over the many sins of the land.

The other two ministers, who had joined with Mr. M'Millan at first, in presenting this paper, were soon prevailed upon to

drop the farther prosecution of the grievances ; by which means he was left alone. Considering it a matter of conscience with him, he still persisted in pleading for redress. This soon rendered him obnoxious to his Presbytery ;—he was considered a troubler of Israel. Accordingly, in the same year 1703, a libel was preferred against him in a very informal and unjust manner, some of themselves being judges. The illegality of this measure was abundantly obvious, inasmuch as, at one and the same meeting of Presbytery, Mr. M'Millan was appointed to preach a visitation-sermon, as a member of that court, in the regular exercise of his office, and also cited to appear at their bar as a panel ; besides, when some attempt was made to lead a proof, not so much as one single charge in the libel could be substantiated. Ashamed, it would seem, of their own conduct, the Presbytery offered to pass from their libel if Mr. M'Millan would promise to drop the prosecution of his grievances, and cordially join with them. Upon his refusal to comply with this proposal, unless he should obtain some redress of such weighty grievances, matters between him and the Presbytery wore still a more unfavourable aspect than before. No other remedy appearing to be now left for the disburdening of his own conscience, he entered his solemn protest against the proceedings of the Presbytery, declined their authority, and appealed to the first free and faithful General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Upon this the meeting broke up, and a considerable number of the members went home ; the rest repaired to a neighbouring church, constituted themselves anew, and, in a very rash and unprecedented manner, deposed Mr. M'Millan from the office of the ministry, without paying the least attention to his protest and appeal, and without so much as informing him or his congregation.

Whether such a sentence, clothed with these circumstances, and without having, or so much as pretending to have for its foundation, error in doctrine, immorality in practice, insufficiency for the ministry, or unfaithfulness in the discharge of it, could really be considered as ratified in heaven, the impartial reader may judge. Mr. M'Millan had no hesitation in declaring it to be unjust, and such as could not bind his conscience ;—all the crime was, honestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. His repeated pleadings with his mother church in the discharge of this duty were indeed branded with the epithets of IRREGULARITIES AND DISORDERLY COURSES ; and, upon the footing of these, the sentence proceeded. But how improperly such terms are applied to the conduct of Christ's witnesses, in faithfully endeavouring "whereunto they have already attained, to walk by the same rule, and to mind the same things," it is surely not very difficult to see. Convinced that the sentence

passed against him had no warrant, either from Scripture or reason, and having the testimony of a clear conscience, that if any thing justly deserving such treatment had been laid to his charge, there were thousands of respectable witnesses to attest his innocence; Mr. M'Millan still continued in the regular exercise of his ministerial office, upon the footing of his former protest and appeal, and was well received by his parish, who uniformly acknowledged him as their lawful pastor, still supporting and countenancing him in that capacity, notwithstanding all that had happened.

It has been objected, "that although, upon the footing of his protest and appeal, he continued for some time to exercise his ministry amongst his people, yet he was soon prevailed upon by the Commission of the General Assembly to subscribe the acknowledgment which they had prepared for him, viz., THAT THE SENTENCES OF AN INFERIOR CHURCH JUDICATORY, THOUGH UNJUST, OUGHT TO BE SUBMITTED TO, AND THAT REDRESS IS TO BE CRAVED AND EXPECTED FROM SUPERIOR JUDICATORIES. Agreeably to which position he actually desisted from the exercise of his ministry—at least for a while."

The fact was never refused; but does it follow, as some have supposed, that Mr. M'Millan hereby divested himself of his office, and so confirmed the sentence of deposition? If the following things be carefully attended to, it will evidently appear that no such conclusion can be drawn from the premises.

In the first place, as the sentence was palpably illegal in its form, and proceeded upon such allegations as could never, from the nature of the things themselves, warrant deposition, it must necessarily be considered as in itself null and void, independently of either Mr. M'Millan's opinion or his conduct, with regard to it. But,

Secondly—It is a well-authenticated fact, that Mr. M'Millan himself never entertained any opinion of this sentence but one, from the day it was first pronounced against him till the day of his death, the short time during which he desisted from the exercise of his ministry not excepted; for, even then, as well as at all other times, he solemnly remonstrated against it as unjust, and such a sentence as could never be binding upon his conscience, nor be considered as any proper reason for his dropping the exercise of his ministry. By this, it clearly appears that he never viewed any thing which he either said or did, after the passing of that undeserved sentence, as involving his approbation or consent.

Thirdly—When Mr. M'Millan rashly yielded to the foresaid acknowledgment which the Commission had prepared for him, he was persuaded to do it under the fair promise and high-raised expectation that, if he would only be silent and remain in Edin-

burgh for a short time, he should have justice done to him, and be restored to his flock again according to his wish. On this condition alone he submitted, and by this stratagem he was taken in the snare. Besides, the very position itself to which he subscribed—"That the sentence of a church judicatory, though unjust, ought to be submitted to," whether it be on one pretence or another, is obviously false, and ought to be rejected by every honest man so soon as he perceives the error and danger of it.

Fourthly—As the church's power is purely ministerial, and she is only the organ or channel through which office power is conveyed from Him who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holds the stars in his right hand, it is perfectly obvious that she has no original authority of her own, or absolute right, either to give or to recall the ministerial office. The one and the other must be done in the name, and agreeably to the will of Christ. And if her deeds speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them; consequently, they cannot bind. Considering these things, we may safely affirm that Mr. McMillan still retained his ministerial powers, notwithstanding all that was done either by the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright or himself. Accordingly,

He no sooner found time to bethink himself, and deliberately consider what he had done, than he perceived his mistake, and sincerely repented of his rash deed, in consenting, either upon one condition or another, or for any given time, to drop the usual exercise of his ministry. Resuming his wonted courage, he entered, without further delay, on the conscientious discharge of the important duties belonging to his station. He considered his former protest, declinature, and appeal, as yet remaining in their full force, inasmuch as he had never retracted them, nor taken any step to render them null; but, on the contrary, had repeatedly confirmed them by his after-remonstrances against the unrighteous deed. He was still heartily received and welcomed by his former flock, who, notwithstanding all that had befallen him, considered and treated him as their lawful pastor. It is obvious, that he and those of his parish who adhered to him as their minister, must now be considered as in a state of separation from the Established Church, and openly avowing their adherence to the principles of Scotland's Covenanted Reformation.

It was while matters continued in this situation that he received the harmonious call above-mentioned, from the united societies of the Old Presbyterian Dissenters, who had never embodied with the revolution church, but remained still without a minister. In the year 1707, they called and invited Mr. McMillan to take them also under his ministerial inspection, along with the people who had all along adhered to him, upon

the footing of the Covenanted Reformation, between 1638 and 1649. With this request he cheerfully complied.

Acting still upon the same principle, he and a Mr. John M'Neil, probationer, on the 29th of September, 1708, gave in to the Commission of the General Assembly at Edinburgh a joint protestation, declinature, and appeal. In this deed, they recognize substantially the very same doctrines and principles which are contained in the Informatory Vindication, and in the Judicial Testimony of the Reformed Presbytery; while their protestation and declinature are founded on much the same defections and corruptions of the revolution church as are stated and condemned in that Testimony, as the printed copies of the protest and declinature, which are yet to be seen, plainly evince.

The public are hereby certified, that the foregoing statement with respect to the deceased Mr. M'Millan's leaving the Established Church is taken from original papers and other documents, the authenticity of which is indisputable, and which could still be shown were it necessary.

Upon the whole, it is obvious that notwithstanding all the objections of his adversaries, Mr. M'Millan's standing claim to the full exercise of his ministerial powers, even to the day of his death, was as valid as hundreds of others in similar circumstances, whose title has never been disputed. It could be no less valid than the claim of all such Protestant ministers as were once in the bosom of the Romish Church; but, separating themselves from her communion, and advocating the cause of the reformation, were subjected to the papal thunder of depositions, excommunications, and solemn execrations. Protesting against the unhallowed deeds, they continued in the full exercise of their ministry, and were still reputed the ambassadors of Christ until the day of their death. It cannot be less valid than the claim of the first ministers of the Secession. These too were suspended and deposed by the judicatories of the revolution church; and, it is deserving of notice, that the real reasons of these deeds were remarkably similar to the reasons of Mr. M'Millan's deposition, namely, their persevering remonstrances against the defections and corruptions of their mother church; and refusing to drop their earnest contendings with her until they should obtain some redress of their just grievances. Denied this, they protested against the unjust sentences passed upon them, and still went on in the exercise of their ministry; but it is presumed that our Seceding brethren would not take it very kind to have their ministerial commission called in question—nor are we disposed to do it. The ministers of the Relief Church will be found in a similar situation. The Rev. Thomas Gillespie, who had been minister of Carnock, was, in the year 1752, deposed by the Assembly, for refusing to countenance a violent settle-

ment. He, with another minister who had left his charge, and was therefore cast out from the communion of the Established Church, constituted themselves into a Presbyterian capacity, and still went on in the exercise of their office. The Reformed Presbytery therefore, are not alone as to the footing on which they retain their ministerial authority.

Having attended to these things, the impartial reader will now be at no loss to discern how illiberal and uncandid, to say no worse of it, must be the statement contained in a late pamphlet, entitled, "A Narrative of the State of Religion in Britain and Ireland. Agreed upon, and enacted by, the General Associate Synod, 2d Sept., 1803." Edit. Edinburgh, 1804. What in this Narrative respects the Old Dissenters is comprehended from page 85, near the top, to page 89; and we are truly sorry to find that in the whole account given of them (others can speak for themselves) there is scarcely one fair and candid representation of facts. Dark insinuations, unfounded assertions, without the shadow of either proof or illustration, and statements remarkably calculated to mislead, comprise the principal part of what is said concerning this people. In an age so distinguished for high claims to liberality of sentiment and Christian charity, we certainly should have expected rather different treatment from our brethren; but the public who have perused our writings on the subject referred to will judge for themselves.

With regard to the Dissenters, this Narrative informs us, "That they had their rise, as a distinct religious party, so long ago as the end of the 17th century, when three ministers, viz., Messrs. Lining, Shields, and Boyd, after giving in two papers of grievances to the Assembly, were received into the communion of the Established Church. Several of the people who formerly adhered to them considered that, by joining with that church, they had materially dropped their testimony, and therefore declined going along with them."

The representation here given is so far just, that, upon this occasion, the people acted the part which is ascribed to them; but we are not certainly to consider this as their first appearance. We have found already that, even as a distinct witnessing party, contending for Scotland's Covenanted Reformation, and endangering their lives in the high places of the field, their origin must be traced more than twenty years farther back than the revolution. "Destitute of pastors," it is said, "they soon gave way to strange fancies about the nature and ends of civil government." But whether these fancies were strange or common, it is plain to a demonstration, as we have also seen above, that they were none other than what had been entertained by our reformers in general, between 1638 and 1649; none other than what were ratified by the fundamental laws of the kingdom

of Scotland—and none other than what were sworn unto in the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms. “Having formed themselves into praying societies,” we are told, “they continued without ministers or public ordinances.” If the meaning be, that they only formed the societies at that time when they had lost the three fore-mentioned ministers, it is a glaring misrepresentation. These societies also were formed more than twenty years before.

The uncandid Narrative proceeds—“Mr. M^cMillan had been deposed by the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright.” It is not refused. But pray, dear brethren, what were the reasons of his deposition? Bore they any resemblance to the reasons for which the first ministers of your own party were deposed by the Established Church? If they did, why not signify this also, seeing you reckon it necessary to publish the fact? Is not the uninformed reader (as the greatest part likely are with regard to that affair,) left to suppose, or rather to conclude, that it would, no doubt, be for error in doctrine, immorality in practice, or some other sufficient cause, that he was deprived of his office. But it seems that it would have been too candid to tell the stubborn fact, that none of these were in the case; and that it was on account of his steadfast adherence to reformation principles, and his honestly insisting for a redress of grievances. “Having,” it is said, “submitted to the sentence; upon receiving a call from these societies, he at his own hand entered upon the exercise of his ministerial office among them.” No, certainly; to that sentence, as just or as binding upon his conscience, he never yielded by subjection unto it, no not for so much as one hour. By what means, and on what fair promises, he was led into the snare of keeping silence for some Sabbaths have been shown above. Having never been legally deprived of his office, nor laid it down, there could be no harm in exercising it at any time when occasion required; but let it be carefully observed, that his entering again on the exercise of his ministry, after the short silence, was altogether unconnected with, and independent of, the call which he afterwards received from the societies; though one would naturally conclude, from the dark, insinuating Narrative before us, that it was at least one, or rather the alone moving cause of the step which he then took.

The other misrepresentations of the Old Dissenters, contained in the Narrative of which we now speak, have been repeatedly considered and answered by our Presbytery and several of their members in their former publications; and, it is hoped, the reader will reckon it but equitable to hear both parties before he draw his conclusions. It hath, indeed, been much the manner of our Seceding brethren, especially of late, to pay no more attention to the answers which have been made to their accusa-

tions, than if they had no existence ; and, at the same time, still to continue their former cry. Perhaps, for their own ease and safety, it may be wisely enough done ; but whether or not it be a candid treatment of their Dissenting brethren, the public must judge.

In dismissing this Narrative before us, there is one thing which can scarcely be overlooked. The poor, despised Dissenters receive no credit for the reality of any thing that they do ; all must be put to the score of mere pretence and false appearance. "They proceeded, A.D. 1712, to WHAT THEY CALLED a renovation of our covenants. Mr. Thomas Nairn, with Mr. McMillan, constituted themselves into WHAT THEY DESIGNED The Reformed Presbytery ; A.D. 1761. They published WHAT THEY CALLED—An Act, Declaration, and Testimony, &c." The reader shall be left to judge whether that be a very handsome mode of speaking, at the beginning of the 19th century, or if it does not rather favour of the old rancour which has too much characterized the controversial writings of former times.

SECTION IV.

THE REFORMATION ATTAINMENTS, TO WHICH THE OLD DISSENTERS WISH STILL TO ADHERE.

It will, we apprehend, be admitted, that whatever advances the individual Christian may have made in useful knowledge, in the vigorous exercises of religion, or in precious intercourse with heaven, he should ever be careful to preserve these. If this be the duty of the individual, it must be difficult to see on what principle it can be refused, that it is also the duty of society whether great or small. On this general principle, then, we are disposed to think that, even of enlightened civil society it may be expected, that whereunto they have already attained in laudable reformation, they should walk by the same rule, and mind the same things.

It is, besides, observable, that the injunctions to this purpose contained in the Sacred Scriptures are conceived in very general terms, and seem to admit of the most extensive application. When we are required to remember how we have received and heard, to hold fast that which we have, to consider wherein we have left our first love, and so on ; there is no restriction of the duty to one species of attainments more than to another. If the advances which have been made be agreeable to the revealed will of God, if they be calculated to promote his declarative glory, whether in civil or religious society ; and if they be for the good of mankind, it seems to be positively required that we steadfastly adhere unto them.

Add to these, that the sin of backsliding, or departure from former attainments, is, in the Sacred Volume, marked by the most pointed reprehension. Many terrible things, in righteousness, were threatened against ancient Israel for transgressions of this kind. Our Saviour, in his personal administrations upon earth, very solemnly warned against the sin of going back; and in his Epistles to the Asiatic Churches, there is no one thing more severely reprimanded than this.

Endeavouring thus to weigh matters in the balances of the sanctuary, the Old Dissenters have uniformly and decidedly been of opinion, that it is their indispensable duty to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. They mean the approving part of their testimony to embrace, in general, all the noble exertions which have been made for the support and defence of the truth as it is in Jesus, from the first dawn of the Gospel on our benighted isles to that memorable period when Scotland's reformation arrived at the zenith of its glory. They indeed put a speciality on the attainments between 1638 and 1649, : for this obvious reason, that while they look back to all the preceding, they comprehend, at the same time, many new and precious advances in both church and state reformation.

Even the infant struggles of the Culdees, or worshippers of the true God, for the first two or three hundred years after the planting of the Christian religion in Scotland, are not to be overlooked, but remembered with gratitude. Soon after the days of the Apostles, while the persecution raged against the Christians in the Roman empire, many fled to our isle for shelter; and, bringing their religion along with them, maintained the pure worship of God in the midst of heathen superstition; while they opposed, on the one hand, the idolatry of the Druidical priests, they were no less zealous, on the other, against the Pelagian heresy, which much prevailed at that time. By means of these faithful witnesses, the ordinances of Christ were long preserved in their original simplicity; while their holy, humble, and circumspect lives were no small recommendation to their Saviour's religion.

In process of time, there arose in the church men who loved to have the pre-eminence—and, from about the middle of the 5th to the beginning of the 16th century, there was a gradual and alarming progress in that worse than Egyptian darkness, which at length wholly overspread the land. A kind of episcopacy was first introduced by Paladius, the missionary of Rome, and to that succeeded, step by step, all the dreadful abominations of Popery; yet, even during that long and dismal period, the Lord left not himself without his witnesses. There were still some who contended for the faith once delivered to the saints, were valiant for the truth upon the earth, and loved not their

lives unto the death. And the more rare such conduct then was, the more honour should be attached to it. As the blood of such martyrs afterwards proved the seed of the church, it is highly proper that their names and their earnest contendings should be kept in everlasting remembrance.

Shortly after the commencement of the 16th century, the Lord stirred up the spirits of Messrs. Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart, and other fellow-sufferers, in the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, valiantly to oppose those Antichristian abominations which had long stood in the holy place. Those brave champions in the reformation cause made a noble stand in defence of the truth; they resisted error and corruption, even unto blood, striving against sin; they had the honourable testimony of God and a good conscience in the midst of their sufferings; while their memories and honest pleadings will be savoury among the faithful friends of Christ to the latest posterity.

Between the years 1557 and 1590, comprehending the principal part of what has usually been termed our first reformation, many precious efforts were made for the purging of the Lord's sanctuary, and also for the rectifying of abuses in the state. A considerable number of public bonds, or covenants, for the maintenance of the true religion, were seriously entered into. Among these, the Deed, known by the name of the National Covenant of Scotland, holds a distinguished place. The famous Scotch Confession of Faith was composed, and was also adopted and solemnly ratified by both church and state. The First and Second Books of Discipline were prepared and brought into practice, as precious helps for supporting the comely order of Christ's house. Many laudable acts were passed, in opposition to the mass, the abuse of the sacraments, the Pope's usurped authority, and other branches of the Romish superstition. Solemn protestations and remonstrances were repeatedly entered against the encroachments which the civil powers were often making on the prerogatives of Christ, and the intrinsic privileges of the church. Much diligence was shown, even for the reformation of the state, while many precious laws were enacted for guarding the throne against iniquity, and requiring both prince and people to profess and practise the same true religion. And what is very remarkable for that time, the line of distinction between the civil and the ecclesiastic authority was drawn with a considerable degree of precision. Such noble exertions for suppressing the abominations of mystical Babylon, and in defence of the truth, have always met with our hearty approbation.

As to the interval between 1590 and 1637, when diocesan prelacy gained very much ground in Scotland, there were then also many faithful witnesses who wrestled very earnestly in behalf of the true Protestant and Presbyterian religion, and whose

honourable exertions, in witnessing for Christ, were long and gratefully remembered. But we now proceed to declare our special and hearty approbation of the precious reformation attainments between 1638 and 1649, as these evidently put the cope-stone upon the building, with the shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it."

While turning their attention to the remarkable advances in reformation which distinguished this period, the Old Dissenters are not ashamed to acknowledge that they include the salutary laws of the state, as well as the procedure of the church, in the objects of their approbation. They consider the Holy Scriptures, wherever they are enjoyed, as the standard of human conduct, even in the state or commonwealth of God's professing people. Nor are they able to conceive why six of the ten precepts in the moral law should respect the demeanour of mankind in civil society, or why so much should be said concerning the qualifications and duties of civil rulers in the volume of inspiration, if it be not the design of Jehovah that these parts of revelation should be actually applied as well as the rest, and that the rules which they exhibit should be reduced to practice. To us it appears inconsistent and absurd to set aside the revealed will of God, even in these matters, and to send back those who enjoy it to the feeble light of their natural and unassisted reason, in the organizing of civil society, fixing its fundamental laws, and ascertaining the terms or conditions on which the places of power and trust are to be filled. A civil state, or nation at large, we have been accustomed to consider as a voluntary association of free agents, having a right to fix on what fundamental laws, and terms of admission into power, they may judge most proper and best calculated to promote the good of the society; providing that, in all cases where they have the benefit of the Bible, these laws harmonize either with the letter or with the genuine spirit and scope of the Scriptures.

Having these views, and acting on these principles, we find that our worthy ancestors, at the period to which we now refer, formed both their civil and their ecclesiastical constitution in such manner as appeared unto them to be consistent with the plainly revealed will of God. From the throne, to the lowest seat of judgment in the nation, the places of power were carefully guarded by salutary laws, excluding Papists, Prelates, and all others of every description who were evidently known to be unfriendly to the covenanted uniformity, and to that precious work of reformation which, in the holy providence of God, was now brought forward to very considerable perfection. Even the army was, in like manner, purged of disaffected persons, while similar laws guarded the various military posts through the kingdom.

While, in this manner, the fundamental and solemnly ratified statutes of the kingdom excluded the known enemies of the reformation, they, on the other hand, required, of all such as should be admitted into places of power, the open profession of the true Protestant and Presbyterian religion, as delineated in the Word of God; the acknowledgment of the doctrines contained in the Confession of Faith, and in the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter; subscription to the binding obligation of the Covenants, National and Solemn League; together with the practical countenancing, defending, and promoting of these, to the utmost of their power, and through the whole extent of their jurisdiction. Many valuable laws were also enacted by the Legislature for encouraging the taking and subscribing of the Covenants, and for suppressing open wickedness.

The advances in reformation which distinguished the ecclesiastical department, at this period, were no less remarkable and worthy of approbation. Prelacy was clearly found to have been abjured by the National Covenant of Scotland. The five articles of Perth, viz., kneeling at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, private administration of it, private baptism, confirmation of children, and observation of holydays, were also found to be condemned by the true spirit of said Covenant. Accordingly, the National Covenant was solemnly renewed and sworn, by all ranks in the land, in this view, and with this explanation of it. The arrogant, ignorant, and grossly scandalous Bishops were suspended, and deposed from their offices. Christ's Headship, as the alone King upon the holy hill of Zion, and the intrinsic privileges of his church, were boldly asserted, and strenuously contended for, in the face of every opposition. Patronages were totally abolished. The Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms was composed, as a happy mean of healing the breaches whereby the land did shake; it was cheerfully sworn by all ranks, and vigorous exertions were made to have the ends of it promoted through every part of the united kingdoms. The best endeavours were made for the promoting of personal holiness; the sanctifying of the Lord's day; the regular performance of family worship in the houses of great and small; conscientious attendance upon public ordinances; and the pointed discharge of all the relative duties in civil and in religious society. A Scriptural confession of faith and catechisms were diligently prepared, openly adopted, and solemnly ratified, by church and state, as the subordinate standards of doctrine for the church of Christ in the three kingdoms. The precious form of Presbyterian church government, drawn from the Word of God, was also composed, and publickly received, as a part of the covenanted uniformity; a valuable directory, for the conducting of public and private worship, was adopted,

with the same view; and a great many acts of the reforming assemblies were published, for assisting in the future management of church affairs. Thus the professing spouse of Christ looked forth, "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Considering human society as formed by mutual consent, and themselves as free agents, the Old Dissenters have always reckoned it their duty, and they reckon it their duty still, solemnly and openly to avow their approbation of the reformation constitution, both civil and ecclesiastic. But in making this avowal, it is very remote from their intention to say, that even the reformation constitutions were absolutely perfect, and incapable of any farther improvement; or, on the other hand, to say that there was nothing good in the revolution settlement. Such thoughts never once entered into their minds. Meanwhile, in respect of conformity to the revealed will of God, the latter can certainly bear no comparison with the former.

SECTION V.

THE DEPARTURES FROM THE REFORMATION ATTAINMENTS,
AGAINST WHICH THE DISSENTERS RECKON IT THEIR DUTY TO
TESTIFY.

WHILE the ministers and professors of the Christian religion in general are required to consider themselves as "set for the defence of the gospel;" it seems likewise to be an important part of their duty, "not to suffer sin upon their brother—to withstand those who are to be blamed"—and to testify against the generation, amongst whom they live, in so far as the deeds thereof are evil.

Our Lord himself not only bore witness unto the truth, but, at the same time, solemnly remonstrated against the Scribes and Pharisees for introducing error and other corruptions into the Church of God. We also find him, in his Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia, particularly commending those who withstood the introduction of error and corruption; while he severely reprehends such as tamely submitted to these evils, and delivered not their own souls by faithfully warning against them.

In imitation of their Lord and Master, we find the Apostles ever careful to combat the false doctrines, corruptions in worship, and gross immoralities, which appeared in their times. It may, indeed, be difficult to manage this part of an honest testimony with becoming temper and spirit; but the most necessary and important duties are often attended with much difficulty in the right performance of them.

Tracing the defections from former attainments, according to the order of time in which they happened, we must give a distinguishing place to the anarchy and confusion which were introduced at the beginning of Comwell's usurpation; by means of which, the reformation-constitutions, both civil and ecclesiastic, were completely unhinged. The *Public Resolutions* for receiving into places of power and trust, through the nation, even such as were abundantly well known to be unfriendly to the covenanted uniformity and fundamental laws of the kingdom, belong also to this period. These things happened in the years 1650 and 1651; and they loudly proclaimed our departure from the living God—for, we may always expect, “that the wicked will walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.” Both church and state revolted more and more, till the restoration of Charles II. in 1660.

From the Restoration, until the Revolution which happened in the year 1688, we find a long and dismal train of defections, which particularly claim our attention, and deserve to be remonstrated against by all who plead the reformation cause. Amongst others, the following may be specified:—

The rash and unqualified restoration of Charles, without any security either sought or given, for the preservation of the true religion, or the observation of the coronation oath which he had taken at Scoon many years before; the superstitious observance of a public anniversary, on account of that unhallowed restoration; the heaven-daring *Act Recissory*, in the year 1661, with other sinful acts of the same backsliding parliament; openly and avowedly overturning, at once, the preceding glorious work of reformation, and branding it with the odious appellations of rebellion and sedition; the re-admission of Prelacy, with its numerous train of concomitant evils, after having been abjured by all ranks of men through the kingdom, in the most solemn manner; the tyrannical restraining of ministerial freedom; the restoring of patronages; the frequent imposition of sinful, and, in some instances, self-contradictory, oaths; the contemptuous rejecting, burning, and burying of the public national covenants, amongst with other publications of the same spirit and tendency; the barbarous and most inhuman persecution of the faithful witnesses for the Redeemer's cause, during the long period of twenty-eight years; together with the many unwarrantable, cunningly devised, and deeply ensnaring tolerations, and indulgences which characterized this period, especially the latter end of it.

While Dissenters testify against toleration, they are not to be understood as meaning a merely passive toleration, implying nothing more than simply permitting men to exist unmolested, and to hold their different opinions, without using external

violence to make them change these, or to exterminate them from the face of the earth if they do not. Forbearance of this kind, after every scriptural and rational mean has been used without effect, cannot be condemned. But what they have in view is, that authoritative toleration in which the rulers of a kingdom, assuming the character of judges in these matters, by their proclamations, or other public deeds, declare what different opinions or systems they will allow to be taught and propagated, and to what modes of worship they will give countenance and protection, while they exclude others from that supposed privilege.

This is unquestionably to usurp the prerogative of Jehovah; for, it should ever be remembered, that no man whatsoever has any right, even for himself, either to hold or propagate opinions which are at variance with the revealed will of God; nor have church members themselves, whether in official or in private capacity, a right either to profess or practise any other religion than what Jehovah, the great Lord of the conscience, prescribes for them. Hence, says the church's Lawgiver, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." How, then, can any man, or class of men, give to others a right which they have not themselves? The true religion, sanctioned by Divine authority, speaks for itself, and needs no toleration from men; false religion ought to be rejected as reprobate silver, and is incapable of toleration. To speak with holy reverence, God himself cannot allow it, inasmuch as it is contrary to his glorious perfections; for mortal men, then, to give it their countenance, must certainly be very daring presumption. But, to carry forward our enumeration,

We may further observe, that between the revolution in 1688, and the present time, there will also be found many striking evidences of our mournful backsliding; against which it becomes us to testify, and over which we ought deeply to lament. The remarkable goodness of Divine Providence at the revolution, in graciously delivering the nation from Popish tyranny and bloodshed, was sadly misimproved by the formation of exceedingly defective constitutions, both civil and ecclesiastic, and by the corresponding administrations ever since. Were we to examine the materials of which the great fabric of the united constitution was at that time composed, we should, no doubt, find many excellent things in both the civil and ecclesiastic departments; but, alas, these were blended with much heterogenous matter, which tarnished the whole, and loudly proclaimed the retrograde motion of the nation's representatives.

The Word of God, which ought to have regulated their conduct in organizing the great civil society of the state, and in fixing the conditions of advancement to places of power and

trust within it, was entirely out of the question. The valuable reformation acts of the Scottish Parliaments between 1638 and 1649, which had been formerly considered as so many precious bulwarks for guarding the places of power, were totally overlooked, and formed no part of the British code at the revolution, nor have they ever formed any part of it since.

Prelacy, which had been openly abjured by all ranks of men in Scotland, England, and Ireland, was now made the foundation and chief corner stone of the great national building; inasmuch as the open profession and practice of it in his own person and family—the legal support and defence of it, as the established religion of England and Ireland—together with the preserving unto the diocesan bishops and churches committed to their charge all such rights and privileges as by law either did or should apertain unto them, were made the essential, the positively fixed condition; without swearing and subscribing to which, the supreme magistrate could not be permitted to wear the British crown. The bishops, blasphemously styled LORDS SPIRITUAL, were declared to be constituent members in one of the Houses of Parliament.

A religious supremacy, totally unwarranted, yea positively condemned in the Word of God, was still vested in the crown. Hence, by the law of England, the king was constituted, “the head and supreme governor of the national church;” the dernier resort in all ecclesiastical causes; an appeal lying ultimately to him in chancery from the sentence of every ecclesiastical judge. In virtue of this authority, it was declared to be his right to convene, prorogue, restrain, regulate, and dissolve all ecclesiastical Synods and Convocations. Nor can it be refused that this supremacy, though not to the same degree, yet, in the true spirit of it, is extended to the Church of Scotland also. From the revolution to the present time, the king assumes it as his right to call, adjourn, or dissolve the general assemblies of the church, according to his pleasure; and there have not been wanting instances of doing it in a very arbitrary and authoritative like manner. He reckons it his prerogative, if need should at any time so require, to circumscribe the objects of their attention, forbidding them to meddle with such things as he may judge it improper for them to discuss. He prescribes for the ministers of the Gospel these political oaths, without the swearing of which they shall not be permitted to exercise their office. He peremptorily commands these ministers, as his servants, to read, on the Lord’s day, after public worship, his proclamations, or other state papers, which may be subservient to the purposes of Government. He authoritatively imposes public fasts upon the church; and commands them to be observed, under the sanction of such civil pains as he and his privy council may

think proper to inflict. By that ensnaring instrument, THE SACRAMENTAL TEST, he requires, even of those who are in the communion of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, that, in order to qualify them for a post under Government, they shall take the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, after the superstitious manner of the Church of England;—a most impious prostitution of that sacred ordinance, and a most glaring imposition upon the consciences of men—providing those who submit to it have any conscience in these matters! Add to these, that the right of presenting to a vacant charge, through a great many parishes in Scotland, is considered as vested in the crown.

As an additional ratification of all those things, an incorporating union of Scotland and England was mutually formed in the year 1707; whereby the former state of matters, in the respective churches, was unalterably confirmed: and, consequently, an attempt made to seal for ever the destruction of that covenanted uniformity in religion which characterized the reformation period. This union was, in the year 1712, followed by a nearly boundless and authoritative toleration; which must also be considered as having the same tendency.

Nor must we forget, in this enumeration, the national countenance given to abjured Popery, by the legal support and defence of it, in the vast province of Canada, in North America; the authoritative toleration of it in England and Ireland, and now also in Scotland; together with the good-will manifested to protect and encourage it in the island of Corsica, during the short time that said island was attached to the British crown.

The repeated and obstinate refusals to abolish the unhallowed slave trade, together with the wantonly entering into, and prolonging many excessively burdensome and destructive wars; though they may not so directly appear as a contrast to the state of things in the reformation period—are, notwithstanding, mournful proofs of our national guilt and departure from the living God, and also deserve to be testified against.

In the Established Church of Scotland, both at and since the revolution, there will likewise be found many things calling for mourning, lamentation, and wo. In her first formation, she cannot, certainly, be considered as a purely scriptural and Gospel church; but rather as a politico-ecclesiastic fabric, inasmuch as the civil state, taking the lead, prescribed, and fixed for her, the doctrine, the government, and discipline, unto which she must adhere; and, having done this, ordered such constituent members, as they thought proper, to sit down in a general assembly to consult, and to rise again, according to their pleasure. In choosing the model on which she was to form, she, or rather the state for her, made a retrograde motion of nearly a hundred years—knowingly and designedly overlooking the precious re-

formation period, between 1638 and 1649; and, consequently, disregarding also her Lord's express command—"Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." She has uniformly and tamely submitted to the various encroachments of the civil power upon her intrinsic rights and privileges, without expressly and openly asserting either the divine and exclusive title of Presbytery, as the alone mode of church-government appointed by Christ, or his sole headship over his church. She has repeatedly and obstinately refused to revive the remembrance of these public and solemn vows which the nation is under to the Most High God; and, accordingly, she has always turned a deaf ear to the many just and weighty grievances which, from time to time, have been tabled before her judicatories, with regard to such culpable omissions. Instead of throwing off the galling yoke of patronage, she has wreathed it more and more closely about her own neck. She has often passed too slightly, and, especially in her higher courts, given too much countenance to Socinian and Arminian errors. Receiving of pecuniary compensations, in place of openly inflicting the censures of the Lord's house, in the case of fornication; private administrations of baptism; and, in a great many instances at least, exceedingly lax admissions to the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper, are also just ground of regret in the Established Church.

We are very sorry that there should be occasion to mention, amongst our mournful departures from reformation attainments, those public testimonies, or statements of religious principles, which treat Divine truths with evident partiality, leaving a very considerable and important part behind. When the ministers of religion are called to teach those amongst whom they labour to observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded; when we are positively enjoined whereunto we have already attained, to walk by the same rule; and when churches and nations are required to remember how they have received and heard, there is never the slightest information given that we are at liberty to pick and choose amongst these things.

But while we lament the partiality of the testimonies, or statements, which we have in view, let us not be misunderstood as though we undervalued or rejected what is praiseworthy in them. If any man, or class of men, be enabled to be faithful even in a few things, we desire to rejoice, yea and herein do rejoice, though we should be under the disagreeable necessity of testifying against them in some other things wherein they are to be blamed. The great pattern of all perfection himself, who came to bear witness to the truth, commended whatever was good in the Asiatic churches to whom his Epistles are addressed, though at the same time he had somewhat against them. His

faithful witnesses, while acting ministerially in his name, and by his authority, seem warranted to follow such a noble example.

To separate from the prevailing party in a corrupt church ; to enter a solemn protest against patronage, the disseminating of erroneous doctrine, and several abuses in discipline and government, and strongly to assert and vindicate the doctrines of free grace, endeavouring at the same time to have them preached and propagated through the land, as our Seceding brethren have done, is all very well ; but why not search the evils to the bottom, and exhibit a full and impartial testimony against all the radical defects of both the civil and ecclesiastic departments in the revolution settlement ? Why attempt to reconcile things which, from their very nature, appear to be altogether irreconcilable—viz., on the one hand, to profess adherence to all the reformation attainments between 1638 and 1649, when Prelacy was solemnly abjured by all ranks of men in the kingdom, and the fundamental laws of the nation required that the prince and the people should be of the same covenanted and Presbyterian religion ; and, on the other hand, to approve and extol a government, the very first and fundamental laws of which require, upon solemn oath, the profession and maintenance of Prelacy, as the indispensable condition upon which the sceptre is to be swayed, in either civil or religious things ? Many acts of mal-administration, in the best of human governments, should be overlooked before we reject them altogether ; but when such things are interwoven into the very essence of the constitution, it must make a material difference. Why pretend to justify, and strongly to approve, the conduct of our renowned martyrs, in the time of the late persecution ; who, though a very small and despised minority in the nation, totally rejected the authority of the powers that then were, in both civil and religious things ; and, at the same time, condemn those who cannot, in judgment and conscience, subscribe to the British Government on account of its fundamental laws, independent of mal-administrations, necessarily involving the nation in mournful apostacy from their former attainments ? Why profess (as is done by one of the parties,) to renew the original covenants, which unquestionably embraced all the reformation attainments in the state as well as in the church, and yet exclude from the bond, avowedly formed for that purpose, the civil part of our reformation ?

⋯ We are as much against blending civil and religious things together, or, in other words, putting them out of their proper place, as our brethren possibly can be. It is well known that a very material part of our testimony is stated in direct opposition to this, and is intended to draw the line of distinction between the church and the state. But as the same bible and the same moral law require the conscientious performance of our duty to

God, and of our duty to man, we are unable to see the inconsistency of expressing our resolution, even in the same covenant, seriously to attend unto the duties comprehended in both tables of the law, though each in their own place; and also of asserting the character of those superiors whom we reckon ourselves bound to obey.

Why refuse, as is done by the other party of our Seceding brethren, to make the trumpet give a distinct sound, with respect to the binding obligation of the National Covenant of Scotland, and of the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms? Does the Word of God forbid, or would it be inconsistent with reformation principles, plainly to speak out; that these covenants, even strictly and formally considered as the righteous and divinely warranted deeds of our ancestors, are still binding on their latest posterity? Is not the party sworn unto the ever-living and true God, whose name and memorial continue the same through all generations? And are not the parties who solemnly lifted up their hands to Him, while collectively and formally considered, still in existence? If the same covenant bound the successive generations of ancient Israel, we cannot see how a scriptural covenant should not, by parity of reason, bind, even yet, from generation to generation.

To dissent from those with whom they formerly associated, on account of their violently settling ministers over reclaiming congregations, and to refuse their countenance to such as preach, or otherwise disseminate legal doctrines, which are the chief characteristics of the Relief party, is so far commendable. But honesty, in such matters, certainly required that something more should have been done. A clear line of distinction ought to be drawn between the church that it is left, and the church that professes to take separate ground, instead of their respective members being frequently mingled together in one of the closest and most solemn acts of church communion upon earth, the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is surely requisite, for vindication of the truth, that other defections in the Established Church, as well as patronage and legal doctrine, should be testified against. Instead of denying the duty of explicit covenanting in gospel times, as a great number, at least, of the Relief body do, it would be much liker the character of Christ's witnesses openly to assert and defend that duty, both as fully warranted by the Word of God, and as a precious part of our reformation-attainments. And, in place of condemning, as these brethren also do, even sound and scriptural creeds and confessions, intended as subordinate tests of orthodoxy, and as happy means of bringing Christians to "think the same things, and to speak the same things," it would, certainly, be more becoming those who mean as well as others to be set for the defence of

the Gospel, candidly to adopt such creeds, and to join with others in the vindication of them. They cannot but know that those who have received the crown of martyrdom for keeping the word of Christ's patience in the hour of temptation are represented as slain, not simply for the Word of God, but also for their testimony which they held concerning it. Nor will it be easy to deny that they themselves, and indeed all societies without exception, are obliged oftentimes to act on the very same general principles upon which creeds and confessions can easily be defended, though they may reject the name.

To allow the Christian people, who may reckon themselves aggrieved by patronage, to erect a separate place of worship in the parish, and to choose their own ministers, who may preach unto them the evangelical doctrines of the Gospel, as is done in the Chapels of Ease through the country, is no doubt suffering the people to exercise part of the liberty wherewith Christ has made his church free; but, to circumscribe the power of these ministers by denying them, either in whole or in part, the keys of discipline and government, or obliging them to hold these at the precarious will of the parish session, is certainly a novelty in the church of Christ—a scheme which has not the shadow of foundation in the revealed will of God.

To manifest a warm zeal, providing it were according to knowledge, for propagating the doctrines of Christianity in the different parts of the kingdom, as the Union churches, or Tabernacle people, with other Independents, profess to do, cannot be blamed, abstractly considered; but it is certainly matter of deep regret that this should be done at the expense of overturning, in part at least, the comely order of Christ's house, by hurrying forward to the work of the ministry great numbers of raw and untutored persons, who have not actually used, nor indeed been allowed time to use, the necessary means of preparation for such an important and arduous undertaking. This procedure is evidently calculated to bring the office of the holy ministry into disrepute, as has frequently been acknowledged even by those who, in other respects, befriended the scheme. It is certainly at variance with both the letter and true spirit of the Divine injunction, "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

We mean not to assert that what is ordinarily called a liberal, or university education, is, in all possible cases, or in all extraordinary circumstances, indispensably necessary to the work of the ministry; nor do we pretend exactly to draw the line, and to say what degree of it may be requisite. Meanwhile, we apprehend that it may safely be admitted as a general rule, that in all ordinary cases, and when time can by any means be afforded, instead of abridging the attention which has been given by Presbyterian churches to such means of pre-

paration, we ought rather, were it practicable, to double our diligence.

It is well known that the Old Testament is originally written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. How we can expect, without a pretty extensive and accurate knowledge of these languages, to explain unto the people the admirable beauty and force of the nervous original—correct mistranslations—or combat the adversaries of divine truth, on their own ground, and with their own weapons, while attempting to shelter themselves under particular texts of Scripture, it is certainly very difficult to see.

If it has pleased God, in the revelations of his will, to comprehend many references to the ancient customs and usages of different nations, to lead our views to geographical descriptions of countries which have been the scenes of his wonderful works, and to give us large portions of natural and moral philosophy, with precious stores of theological truths, we should reckon it a fair conclusion, that a very considerable proportion of time and attention ought to be bestowed on these things, in order that we may ourselves understand what we read, and may be the better fitted, through the Divine blessing on these means, to explain and illustrate it unto the others, for their instruction and comfort.

As to the superior claim of the Presbyterian above the Independent form of church-government, it is surely very obvious that, through the Divine revelation, a line of distinction, clear as noon-day, is uniformly drawn between teachers and taught, the pastors or shepherds of the flock who are to feed and rule them, and the flock itself put under their care. A statement which, though it stood alone, we humbly apprehend, would amount to a demonstration that the power, whether of ruling, discipling, or feeding the flock of Christ is not indiscriminately committed to the community at large, but to certain persons solemnly and formally set apart for that very purpose, according to the obvious rules of the Word.

Nor is it less plain that the Sacred Scriptures require all office-bearers in the church, whether only ruling with diligence, or besides that, also labouring in word and doctrine, to be possessed of such peculiar gifts and qualifications as cannot be reasonably expected amongst the multitude in general—even granting them to be the multitude of those who believe, and who, in other respects, may be of one heart and one soul. Besides,

Can it be denied, that when Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and granted a power ministerially to bind and loose upon earth what should be bound and loosed in heaven, when the procedure was in his name and agreeable to his will; he made not this grant to all church members indiscriminately,

but to chosen disciples or apostles, whom he clothed with a commission to go and preach the Gospel to every creature, and to teach the nations, baptizing them?

It also claims our notice, that, according to the scriptural account of the holy ministry, as comprehending both ruling and feeding, it is such a laborious and interesting service as requires those who are called unto it to give themselves wholly to that very thing—whether teaching, they must wait on their teaching—or ministry, they must wait on their ministry.

Add to these, that in the primitive apostolical churches they were not the people or community of church members at large who ordained those decrees, which seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them, and which were given for regulating the conduct of Christian congregations; but they were the APOSTLES AND ELDERS who had come together for that purpose, in open court, to be sure, and cheerfully allowing the multitude to attend, which is also the case with the Presbyterians of later times.

It will no doubt be objected, “that even with Presbyterians, some of the people, ordinarily called lay elders, are allowed the honour of ruling in the church;” but this militates nothing against the general argument. These ruling elders stand not alone, nor compose the body of those who take the management of church affairs; they are only added for the better conducting the discipline and government of the church, as helpers or assistants unto those who labour in word and doctrine; they are, by the congregation’s choice, selected and separated from their brethren; they are always considered as distinguished from the multitude at large, by such gifts and qualifications as are requisite for the part which they have to act; and they are solemnly ordained, and set apart for their office. They are, indeed, usually employed like other men in some one or other of the common avocations of human life. But even with respect to that, it is an object of attention that they shall, if possible, be less embarrassed with worldly concerns, than what many others of the congregation must necessarily be. So that we still proceed on the broad principle, “that all are not prophets—all are not pastors,” nor are all even ruling elders, for managing the discipline and government of the Christian church.

SECTION VI.

CONTAINING AN OUTLINE OF THE DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, DISCIPLINE, AND GOVERNMENT, TO WHICH THE OLD DISSENTERS ADHERE, AND OF THEIR PRESENT SITUATION. [AN. 1806.]

THE form of sound words which Christ himself has exhibited in the sacred oracles, the Dissenters always consider as the rule

for their doctrine. As a subordinate standard agreeable to this, they adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, which they consider as a well digested summary of what should be taught in the church. These doctrines are generally distinguished by the names Evangelical or Calvinistic. But the Dissenters wish to regard things rather than names.

With respect to worship, they consider the following as the divinely instituted ordinances of religious worship, in which God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; public prayers, with the heart and with the understanding also, and in a known tongue, but not in written, or humanly prescribed forms; singing psalms of divine inspiration, and these alone; reading and expounding the Scriptures; preaching, and receiving the Word; administering, and receiving the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; together with public fasting and thanksgiving, as the circumstances of the church may require. But they reject all rites and ceremonies of human invention, without exception. Agreeably to this, they follow substantially, as a subordinate rule, the Westminster Directory for public worship.

For regulating their discipline, both as to matter and manner, the Dissenters wish carefully to attend unto what the Spirit saith to the Churches, especially in the New Testament; while, in consistency with this, they take what aid they can find, from the ancient books of discipline of public authority in the Church of Scotland, together with the acts and decisions of Assembly in the time of the Reformation. And as to the particular mode of proceeding in these matters, they observe much the same forms of process with the other Presbyterian churches of Scotland.

With regard to the church rule, and the subordination of the several Ecclesiastic Courts, the Old Dissenters are strict Presbyterians, taking, according to the best judgment they are able to form of them, the Holy Scriptures for their infallible standard; and, in subordination to these, adopting the form of presbyterial church government, agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly. Some of their reasons for preferring this to every other mode of managing matters in the Church of Christ, may be seen above.

The Old Presbyterian Dissenters have nothing to boast with respect to the numbers of either their ministers or people. They have not, as yet, had any Ecclesiastical Court among them higher than a Presbytery. They have, indeed, three of these in their connexion—one in Scotland, one in Ireland, and one in North America. These, and the people under their inspection, have hitherto, on account of their local situation, only considered themselves and corresponded together as sister

churches, espousing the same testimony, and acting on the same principles. It hath sometimes, indeed, been proposed to divide the Scotch Presbytery, and to form a Synod; but, owing to a considerable number of deaths amongst their ministers, it hath not yet been carried into execution. In Scotland, they have about sixteen congregations, some small, and some larger, but none of them very numerous. Of these, eleven have fixed pastors, two of the eleven being collegiate charges. The rest of the congregations are vacant for the present. In Ireland, they have ten congregations which have fixed pastors, and two vacant. In America, five, which have fixed pastors, and four or five vacant. Their judicial testimony, together with the various defences thereof; their terms of communion, accompanied with an explanation and defence; together with their several warnings against Popery, against Socinian and Unitarian errors, and against some prevailing sins and immoralities, are before the public, and may be consulted by those who choose.

APPENDIX.

CONTAINING A FEW STRICTURES ON A PROPER TESTIMONY FOR THE TRUTH.

AMIDST the various capacities in which the Christian is called to act, it must not be forgotten that he sustains the character of a witness—"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." To support the honour of this character, it becomes necessary to exhibit a proper testimony for Christ, and for the word of his patience. It deserves consideration, what may be some of the distinguishing characteristics of such a testimony.

Whether the deed of this kind be verbal or written, it should, unquestionably, be stated and exhibited under the influence of pure inward motives; the party, whether an individual or a society at large, having it as the great concern to act in the fear of the Lord, and with a suitable regard to his declarative glory amongst men. Though our fellow Christians cannot enter into the springs of action in our heart, nor have they any title to do it; yet it is the Lord's prerogative, to search the heart, and to try the reins. Accordingly, we owe it as a tribute unto his omniscience, to keep our hearts, with all diligence, and to examine carefully, if they be right with him, in this, as well as in every other duty; especially as there are many deceits by which we are liable to be ensnared. A self-righteous principle, disposing the party to say unto his neighbour, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou"—a kind of malicious pleasure in finding fault—a desire of making a fair show in the flesh, by having a name to live amongst those around us; or wantonly assuming the fair cloak of a flaming profession as a cover for practical irregularities; these, or such like sinister motives may, peradventure, be frequently found to actuate, many professors of religion. The Scribes and Pharisees of our Saviour's time could manifest a warm zeal for the sanctification of the Sabbath, while the malicious design was to asperse the character of him who could not possibly be convicted of sin. Of all such motives the witness for Christ should ever be aware.

Let it also be remarked, that a testimony for the truth, as it is in Jesus, should be wholly regulated by the Sacred Scriptures. These are Jehovah's own testimony for asserting the honour of his kingdom, and the glory of his excellent Majesty. And wherever they are enjoyed, they should be considered as the infallible standard for directing the conduct of his reasonable offspring, in both their ecclesiastic and civil capacity. If the Church of the living God candidly confess that he is their judge and their lawgiver, as well as their Saviour; if they view themselves as moral agents, responsible to him for every part of their conduct; and, if Christ, who, as Mediator, now exhibits the law for the rule of his people's life, be recognized as the rightful Lord and Master of all his witnessing disciples; it necessarily follows, that their public appearances for the interests of his kingdom, as well as all their other conduct, must be regulated by what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. Even in the inferior concerns of human life, wise men at least always act upon a plan, observe some one rule or another, for directing their procedure, and have some distinct object before them. This, surely, cannot be less necessary in the honourable employment of bearing witness for Christ. With respect, then, to both the matter and the manner of a public testimony, the sacred injunction must ever be observed, "to the law and to the testimony," that is, to the revealed will of God in the oracles of truth, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

The laudable deed of which we speak, though it cannot possibly comprehend a minute detail of every particular, should, notwithstanding, exhibit an unbiassed summary of divine truth in general. In giving the outline of the precious doctrines contended for, and of the errors and immoralities testified against, there should be no consultations with flesh and blood, in order to avoid reproach. Even such articles as may be more obnoxious to a lukewarm generation, or calculated to render the testimony more unpopular, ought not, for that reason, to be omitted. Every branch of the truth, as it is in Christ, acknowledges the same divine author, and therefore challenges our sincere veneration. The Apostle of the Gentiles, shunned not to declare unto the Elders of the Ephesian Church ALL the counsel of God. And when the Redeemer sent his ambassadors to disciple the nations, baptizing them, his positive injunction was, "teaching them to observe ALL things whatsoever I have commanded you." The modern division of Scripture doctrines into circumstantial and fundamental, is exceedingly insnaring, inasmuch as no certain rule can be given for properly drawing the line between these. Whence it is obvious, that every one will do it as best suits his own purpose. Aided by

this delusive distinction, the professors of religion may, if they choose, very conveniently exclude from their testimony even seasonable and important truths, or precious attainments of former times, under the fair pretence that these are only the circumstantialia of religion.

In order to exhibit a proper testimony to the world, it is no less necessary that it be conducted with impartiality, as to the persons or parties who are justly to be blamed. We are no advocates for the scheme of levelling all distinctions in human society. We readily grant a subordination of rank; and admit the propriety of "giving honour to whom honour is due." Meanwhile, we apprehend, that it is fully consistent with doing so, impartially to testify against the errors and vices of high and low, rich and poor. Even a famous king of Judah may be plainly told, by a faithful minister of the sanctuary, "it appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord." Daniel could give the proud Babylonish monarch his ordinary and distinguishing titles; and yet honestly warn him, "to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor." Yea, in full consistency with esteem for exalted character, even one eminent apostle of the Lamb may 'withstand another to the face, because he is to be blamed,' for his partiality and unfaithfulness. The plain call of heaven is, "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

A testimony expected to meet the Divine approbation must also comprehend the great doctrines of eternal life and happiness, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Paul, who belonged to that noble cloud of witnesses, with whom the believers of his time were compassed about, declared of himself, "that he was set for the defence of the Gospel." Necessity was laid upon him to preach the doctrines of free grace and salvation. He determines, comparatively speaking, "to know nothing but Christ and him crucified." When the Corinthians were made willing, in the day of power, and divinely taught to embrace Christ and his salvation, the same apostle tells them, for their comfort, "the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you." The beloved disciple was a strenuous advocate for the eternal deity, the true Messiahship, the prophetic, priestly, and kingly character, and for the sovereign love and rich grace of his Divine Lord; and he says himself, as a witness for these things, "That he bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." In like manner, the two witnesses to whom the Lord gives power to prophesy in sackcloth, during the reign of antichrist, are uniformly represented not only as "keeping the commandments

of God," but also as "having the testimony of Jesus Christ." That is, as a judicious expositor well expresses it, "mainly as both a doctrinal and practical witness to the purity of the doctrine, and of all its ordinances or worship, according to Christ's institutions." Indeed, a proper concern for the honour of the Redeemer, and the happiness of immortal souls, renders the giving of a public testimony indispensably necessary.

It must not be forgotten that every such deed as properly deserves the name of an honourable testimony for Christ, and for the word of his patience, must also in a special manner include those truths which are particularly opposed in the time and place in which the witnessing party's lot has fallen. The conduct of the valiant soldier in the armies of earthly kings, might serve for the Christian's example here. A garrison appointed to defend a town, or other important place, will carefully observe where the danger is greatest, or the most furious assault is made, and will manage the defence accordingly. Let not the spiritual and good soldiers of Jesus Christ, required to endure hardness in his cause, be behind in this duty;—let them ever observe and zealously contend for the PRESENT truth. That Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messias, promised to the fathers—that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them—that he died for his people's offences, and rose again for their justification—that he was exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and the forgiveness of sins—and that there is no salvation in any other, these were the great truths most violently attacked and vigorously opposed in the days of the apostles; accordingly, they set themselves for the defence of these in the most strenuous manner, not loving their lives, even unto the death. In this, as in many other things, they have left us a noble example, that we should follow their steps. Once more,

A testimony rightly stated for the interests of religion, should undoubtedly embrace all the honourable attainments of former times. Either this must be admitted, or some excuse must be found for going back, even after we have known the way of righteousness; but for this the Word of God makes no allowance. On the other hand, it teaches us to examine, not only if the things contended for be good and important in themselves, abstractly considered, but also if they have been known and received before; and if it be found that they make a part of the "faith once delivered to the saints," and have been comprehended in the former faithful testimonies of the church, this is always viewed as an additional consideration for enforcing our steadfast adherence unto them. It is well known, agreeably to what hath been noticed in the above Abstract, how many terrible things in righteousness are spoken by the inspired prophets of

old, and by Christ and his apostles, in New Testament times, against the sin of backsliding, or leaving their first love; and also, what solemn injunctions are given, “to remember how we have received and heard; and to hold fast that which we have, that no man take our crown.” Every testimony, therefore, which drops even a part only of former honourable attainments, must be in so far deficient and liable to exception. Seriously attending to these things, the danger of going back on the one hand, and the satisfaction of obeying the Lord’s will on the other, should powerfully influence us all, ‘Where to we have already attained, to walk by the same rule, and to mind the same thing.’

III.

AN
EXPLANATION AND DEFENCE
OF THE
TERMS OF COMMUNION,
ADOPTED BY
THE COMMUNITY OF DISSENTERS;
TOGETHER WITH
AN INTRODUCTION,
CONTAINING
SOME REMARKS ON THE PROPRIETY OF TERMS
OF
COMMUNION IN GENERAL.
THE
WHOLE INTENDED TO OBVIATE SOME MODERN OBJECTIONS,
AND TO
SATISFY THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO ARE WILLING
TO BE INFORMED ON THE SUBJECT.
BY THE
REFORMED PRESBYTERY.

“ They continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.”—Acts ii. 42.

EXPLANATION,

&c.

INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING SOME REMARKS ON THE PROPRIETY OF TERMS
OF COMMUNION IN GENERAL.

WERE mankind disposed to drop their prejudices, and to allow the subject a dispassionate consideration, it is presumed that the propriety of explicit terms of admission to the privileges of the church might easily be discerned. They seem, indeed, to result from the very nature of society, in this imperfect state. By society, we understand a number of reasonable beings, accountable to God and to one another, all closely united on some general principles, in which they agree, and on which they resolve mutually to act, for the good of the whole. It is self-evident that they can never properly co-operate in the prosecution of the same great designs, unless there be a good understanding amongst them; but it is not easy to conceive how this can properly subsist without a clear and distinct statement of the general principles in which they agree, and of the important ends which they have in view. Hence it is, that all societies, less or greater, civil or religious, have their respective regulations; the approbation of which is made the condition of membership and of participating in the peculiar privileges of the society. So very powerful is the law of necessity in this case, that, in all ages of the world, its operation on the minds of men hath been uniformly felt. Now, in ecclesiastic society, the great object of public creeds and explicit terms of communion is, to state and explain the general principles in which the members of the association are agreed, in order to promote a good understanding and a proper harmony amongst them. The adoption of terms, therefore, seems to be highly requisite. Nor doth this mode of reasoning concerning their propriety, in the least savour of will-worship; for, it must ever be remembered, that no terms in any church are warrantable, unless they be plainly sanctioned by "Thus saith the Lord." But when the matter of them is found to be scriptural, we thus prove them to be, like every other part of our holy religion, a reasonable service.

It is objected, "If terms of communion as you grant should always be, for the matter of them, scriptural, why state them in our own language at all; can we express them any better than they are already expressed in the Sacred Oracles?"

To this we reply, That if mankind in general properly understood the Scriptures, at first instance, and were disposed rightly to apply them, we should certainly say, Amen, to the doctrine of the objection; but it obviously proceeds on a very false supposition, namely, that all in general who apply for admission to the privileges of the church may be expected properly to understand and apply the Scriptures, without the diligent use of ordinary means for their assistance. The mournful experience, however, of the Church in every age and daily observation, assure us that the Scriptures are very liable to abuse, and are often grossly perverted. The trumpet blown in Zion, therefore, must give a distinct sound. Were the Roman Catholic, the Episcopalian, the Independent, and the Presbyterian to be asked, if they were willing to receive the Bible as the rule of their conduct in their church capacity—they would all answer in the affirmative. But it doth not follow that their very opposite modes of church government are substantially the same, and equally agreeable to the revealed will of God. The Arian, the Socinian, the Arminian, the Antimonian, and the Calvinist, are all equally ready to aver that the Bible is the standard of their faith and practice. Must we hence conclude; that their several doctrines are the same? Or would there be even the shadow of consistency in such a mixed association of communicants sitting down at the same table, under the open profession of believing in the same Lord, and of holding the one faith, and the one baptism, of his prescription? To instance one particular out of many—suppose a Roman Catholic and a Protestant to be both asked, if they believe in the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, concerning the administration and reception of the Lord's Supper; none of them would hesitate to answer, Yes. They would, with equal readiness, subscribe these words in the original institution, "This is my body." We could not certainly from this conclude, that the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, and the Protestant doctrine, that the bread only signifies or represents Christ's body, are much the same. Nor is it easy to see the smallest propriety or consistency, in such persons holding communion together at the Lord's table. But if the Scriptures must be made the terms of communion, at first instance, or without any explanation and statement of truths, in our own language, we shall soon find ourselves obliged to admit persons of diametrically opposite faith and practice. Explanation is surely necessary. And our public creeds and terms of communion were never viewed in any other light, even by

those who have been most warmly attached to them, than as subordinate helps for our right understanding and applying the Scriptures. We never formed the remotest thought of substituting them in the place of the Bible, or putting them on a level with it; but when they are evidently “founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God”—the manner in which all our subordinate standards are uniformly qualified—we reckon it our duty to adopt them and faithfully to adhere unto them. It is observable that almost all the public creeds, confessions, and explicit terms of communion, take it for granted that these confessions and the Word of God are at variance with each other. They suppose the one to require what the other forbids: and hence, they state the question, Whether we should obey God rather than men? But if God and men require, substantially, the same thing, where is the inconsistency of obeying both in their own place? A warm zeal for the Holy Scriptures and a strong attachment to sound creeds and terms of communion, are so far from implying any contradiction, that the one necessarily involves and loudly proclaims the other. He, who, in the time of danger, uses the best means in his power for the defence and protection of the injured, certainly proves the best friend. While many are perverting the Scriptures to their own and others’ destruction, we should do the most we can to have them kept pure and entire. It will be said, “The native force of truth, and the power of God, who is the author of the Scriptures, will keep them pure, and make them successful, independent of our creeds and confessions.” But God, in his infinite wisdom, hath been pleased to work by means adapted to the end, and to instruct us by men of like passions with ourselves. Besides, upon the principle of expressing terms of communion in the language of Scripture only, would it not follow that men were equally restricted to employ none other than the language of the Holy Spirit, in all their social acts of religion, such as offering their joint prayers to God, and administering the ordinances of the gospel? Nay, in the perusal of the Scriptures themselves, would we not be restricted to the necessity of resorting unto the original words of inspiration, without daring to use even the most just and correct translation? But it is obvious, and hath often been proved by facts, that the grand aim of this objection is, first to demolish the strong bulwarks of orthodox terms of communion distinctly ascertained; and then, by the bare sound of unexplained scriptural phrases, to establish the cause of error the more easily.

The propriety of explicit terms of admission to the privileges of the Christian Church will also appear, by turning our attention to the following, and such like very solemn and divinely inspired injunctions. “I beseech you, brethren, by the name

of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.”*

From the express words of the Holy Spirit in these passages, it is abundantly plain that the union positively required consists not merely in worshipping together, within the same walls, or in sitting down together at the same holy table of the Lord. It evidently comprehends a union in sentiment, and in the open profession of the truth as it is in Jesus. They must “be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and must speak the same things;” but in every period of the church false doctrines have actually been propagated—misunderstandings and divisions have taken place. How error, which the adversaries of truth have taught and propagated, in their own language, and in their own way, can be either consistently or successfully refuted, and the opposite truths fairly stated, so as to form a proper contrast, unless we meet our opponents on their own ground, and also use human language in exhibiting a faithful testimony for the truth, it is not easy to see. If we should simply refer them to the Scriptures without any reasoning on the subject, they would reckon themselves secure in the possession of their erroneous opinions. Nor is it less difficult to discern how divisions can be properly prevented, or misunderstandings removed, without clearly stating and explaining our sentiments. We cannot otherwise consistently walk together as those who are agreed, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” And firmly believing “That there is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”†

It is purely in subserviency to this scriptural union that we insist on having distinct terms of communion. Meanwhile, we do not, as some modern writers allege, “present to our minds a description of a society without any difference of judgment whatever in religion, and studying to believe whatever is the practice of their brethren, rather than what the Word of God enjoins concerning affection and Christian fellowship.” We are sensible that while men are in this imperfect state, some diversity of opinion may still be expected to exist, even after all the means which can be used to prevent it. But this, instead of weakening, greatly strengthens our argument, while it evidently shows the propriety of employing, at least, all the means

* 1 Cor. i. 10; Phil. i. 27.

† Eph. iv. 3, 5.

in our power, in order to prevent this diversity. As to "believing whatever is the practice of our brethren," we, indeed, wish to "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." And to "be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." It is not, however, the practice, either of our reforming forefathers of old, or of our brethren in our own times, that we make the formal reason of our belief. We consider the law of God as obliging both them and us "to think the same things, and to speak the same things; holding fast the form of sound words, and keeping the ordinances as they have been delivered to us." While we study, by all means possible, to have our own and our brethren's faith and practice harmonizing together, we constantly contend that both theirs and ours must be in unison with the infallible standard of truth and duty.

We shall likely be told, "Though the Apostle, in the above and similar passages of Scripture, required Christians assiduously to press after the exalted attainment of unanimity in the faith, yet he never can be understood as suspending the enjoyment of church-fellowship among them, on such unanimity; for the elsewhere enjoineeth upon them the duty of mutual forbearance in some matters of faith and practice, wherein they might happen to disagree. Wherefore, the condition of fellowship seems rather to have been unanimity in fundamental articles only, and an agreement to forbear in less matters when the sentiment might be various." But it is evident that this objection proceeds upon a capital mistake, with regard to the proper objects of the Christian forbearance intended by the Apostle. These are not matters of faith and practice to be believed and observed, but such weaknesses and infirmities of temper as are inseparable from this imperfect state, together with the personal injuries which one Christian may receive from another; accordingly, applying the word to such objects, he thus exhorteth Christians—"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any."* From the frequent occurrence of these objects in social life, the Christian will find ample scope for this forbearance. His charity as to these will bear all things, and cover a multitude of sins, while his well-directed zeal will prompt him to contend earnestly for all the faith once delivered to the saints. The doctrine of modern forbearance among persons of opposite belief, inducing them to form a compromise in which they mutually agree to differ, and never more to mention discording tenets, leads, in its native tendency, to the suppression of truth, and the lasting concealment of so many articles of faith, as the jarring sentiments may happen to

* Colos. iii. 13.

hinge upon. And what is the amount of this, but to banish for ever from the faith of the Church, a great number of precious truths contained in the Word of God, and designed by him for the spiritual comfort and edification of his people? And all this to obtain a Catholic union amongst professing Christians, at the expense of losing sacred truth. An agreement to divide, in matters of faith and practice, sounds ill with the injunction, "be perfectly joined together in the same mind."

The argument taken from the believing Jews being allowed communion in the Christian Church, while they still retained some of the old ceremonies, will not help the matter. These ceremonies were originally of divine institution, a circumstance which never can apply to any human invention; and, besides, there was a positive permission, under certain restrictions, granted by the Church's Head to the believing Jews to observe, for a time, some of the ancient ceremonies respecting meats and drinks, till they should be better instructed on the subject of their total repeal, by the death of the glorious Surety. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him." *

Our Lord's doctrine in his Epistles to the Churches of Aisa, evidently favours distinct and explicit terms of admission into the fellowship of the Christian Church, in all succeeding ages. As the true and faithful witness is himself the glorious author of these Epistles, no reason is left for disputing the truth or propriety of what they contain. And as they are all concluded with this solemn injunction, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches;" it is equally certain that what things they inculcate were written for our learning; and, in their true spirit and scope, are no less applicable now than they were then.

But the Church of Pergamos is sharply reprov'd for retaining in her communion those, "Who held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." As also those "who held the hateful doctrine of the Nicolaitanes." The Church of Thyatira, in like manner, receives very severe reprehension from Him who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, "because she suffered that woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce his servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols." The meaning of which seems to be, that this Church did not properly call to account, and openly exclude from her communion, some person, or class of persons, within her juris-

* Rom. xiv. 3.

diction, who, in respect of extensive influence, lascivious practice, and cunning craftiness, lying in wait to deceive, remarkably resembled Jezebel of old—whence the following things are abundantly obvious:—*1st*, That the public, and regularly installed office-bearers of the Church, though they have not, in themselves, originally any authoritative power, yet they have a ministerial power, derived from the Church's glorious Head, in virtue of which it is their province, acting in his name, and according to the plain revelations of his will, to judge and determine concerning the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of his house. If they were not really clothed with such a power, they could never, consistently, be blamed for not exercising it. *2dly*, That the Church's testimony should be clearly stated, in defence of truth and holiness, and should also be faithfully pointed, not only against all error and immorality in general, but, in a special manner, against those errors and immoralities which more remarkably prevail where providence hath ordered her lot. The ensnaring doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes were prevalent in Pergamos and Thyatira, and should therefore have met with the most pointed opposition from these churches; while the discipline of the Lord's house should have been faithfully and impartially executed upon those who propagated them. *3dly*, That every true church of Christ ought to exclude from her fellowship all who hold and propagate erroneous opinions, or are chargeable with immoral practices; the Spirit of God, speaking in the Scriptures, always being the supreme judge; while "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." *4thly*, That the toleration of error and immorality, in whatever shape these may appear, is a thing expressly condemned in the Scriptures. The God of truth himself, by reason of his glorious perfection, neither can nor will do it. For any mortal, then, to take so much upon him, must certainly argue the highest presumption. Whether he be clothed with civil or with ecclesiastic authority, it must be extremely arrogant to assume a power of defending, supporting, or maintaining what the universal and unerring standard of right and wrong positively prohibits. The solemn charge against the ministry of the church in Thyatira, was, "Thou sufferest."

In the spirit of modern objections, we might expect to hear it said, "Why were not those persons who held the doctrines of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitanes, allowed to think for themselves in matters of religion? Might it not have been granted that their lips and their consciences were their own, and that no man was lord over them?" Nay, but who art thou, O man, that replest against the plain dictates of the Holy Spirit, speaking in

the Scriptures? Though no man or class of men be lord of another's conscience, yet the God of truth, who hath favoured us with a very full and clear revelation of his will, is assuredly the Lord of all our consciences; and no man can ever consistently plead a right to think, speak, or act, differently from what he hath prescribed in his Word. And be it so, "that there is considerable difficulty in ascertaining the true meaning of Scripture, and that every one will be disposed to put his own gloss upon it, and so leave us as much in the dark as ever with respect to the path of duty." The only just inference we can draw from this is, that we have the greater need to double our diligence, and to call in the aid of expositions, confessions, explicit terms of communion, and every other rational mean which may be helpful to remove the difficulty, and for enabling us to understand one another. But if, from the doctrine that we cannot easily bring men to think and speak alike concerning the meaning of the all-perfect standard, this inference were to be drawn, "that nothing should be positively fixed, but every one left to believe, and to profess, as he may find cause," we then go upon the very absurd supposition, that there is no reality in things, independent of men's opinion and fancy; nor any possibility of rightly understanding what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Which leads us, at once, into downright scepticism; a most dangerous extreme, to which many of the loose modern doctrines evidently tend. He must be very little acquainted with his Bible who doth not grant that its contents, in general, are incomparably more plain, and easy to be understood, than are the contents of the statute books in the kingdoms of this world. Yet every, the meanest and most illiterate subject in the kingdom, must regulate his conduct according to the laws of his country, or suffer for his transgression. The authority of **JEHOVAH** is, unquestionably, superior to that of any earthly prince; while those things which immediately concern our faith and practice, as Christians and members of the gospel-church, and with regard to which the solemn authority of God is interposed, are of infinitely more importance than our temporal affairs. And, seeing the Lord hath given us a very full and clear revelation of his will, with the fairest opportunities and best means of understanding it to plead a liberty, of turning it into a thousand shapes, and accommodating it to such faith and practice as every one may choose to prescribe for himself, is certainly expressive of very little regard to the King of saints.

To the above we shall only at present add the divinely authorized practice of the apostolic church; from which may be drawn an invincible argument to prove the propriety of explicit terms in admitting to Christian privileges in the house of God. When the church's risen Lord, in virtue of having re-

ceived all power in heaven and in earth, sent forth his disciples, in their public capacity, he authorized them to administer the seals of the new covenant, or testament, in his blood. He, at the same time, gave it in solemn charge, to accompany the administration of these seals with the instructing of the nations in the knowledge of divine truth. And it is observable, that they were not to content themselves with teaching them one, or a few leading truths, which might be called fundamental; but all the different articles of his revealed will in general, so far as they had opportunity, and circumstances might require.—“Teaching them,” says he, “to observe **ALL THINGS** whatsoever I have commanded you.”* To this rule, prescribed by their adored Master, the Apostles were ever careful to conform their public administrations.

On the memorable day of Pentecost, when their hearers “were pricked in their heart, and said unto them, What shall we do?” the term of admission to the privilege of baptism was, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost.” As much as to say, in faith’s dependence upon Him who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins, and, with holy contrition of soul, renounce your former errors, and abominable practices. Change your former sentiments and conduct. Receive Christ, as made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Embrace the Christian religion in all its peculiar doctrines. On this footing you shall receive the privileges of the church. Accordingly, it is added, “They that gladly received His word were baptized.” From the preceding part of the chapter we learn, that this word, which they received, was a plain sermon concerning Christ in his mediatorial capacity and work; clearly exhibiting him as the once crucified, but now exalted Lord of his church—the Saviour, who was delivered for our offences; and raised again for our justification.†

After the Ethiopian eunuch had heard an important and very instructive passage of the Old Testament, concerning the true Messias, properly explained to him, and had given suitable attention to a precious gospel-sermon, delivered from it, he expressed his wish to receive the ordinance of baptism. The reply was, “If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” After this profession, “They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.”‡

Cornelius and his company solemnly and openly professed,

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

† See Acts ii.

‡ Acts, viii. 37, 38.

“Now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” In this day of the Redeemer’s power, they were a willing people; professing themselves ready to receive, and obey every law of the God of heaven so soon as it was made known to them by the mouth of his servant. “The Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the Word;” namely, the affecting sermon, concerning Christ and him crucified. “Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?—And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”* Still, we see, the greatest care is taken to have the subjects of the ordinance properly instructed in the mysteries of the Christian religion; and to obtain from them an open profession of their faith in Christ, and of their ready subjection to the laws of his kingdom.

With regard to the ordinance of the Lord’s supper, the Apostles, in their terms of admission, were no less pointed and explicit. “Continuing steadfastly in the Apostle’s doctrine,” was, by them, inseparably connected with church “fellowship in breaking of bread,” *i. e.* as the best expositors ordinarily understand the passage, in partaking of the Lord’s supper.† They were ever anxious that this holy ordinance should be guarded against abuses, occasioned by divisions, heresies, or gross profanity. They admitted none to their Redeemer’s love-feast but such as professed their ready subjection to the comely order of his house; and were careful to examine themselves, before they should eat of that bread and drink of that cup. They were abundantly sensible, that he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. But none can truly be said to discern the Lord’s body unless they properly understand, as well as seriously believe, the gospel-scheme of salvation, through the complete satisfaction of Christ, in his people’s room.

Fully consistent with this is the Apostle’s holy zeal, that none should be introduced into the church, nor suffered to embody with her, who are erroneous in their opinions, and wish to mix their own inventions with the institutions of Christ. Speaking of such “false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out their liberty, which they had in Christ Jesus, that they might bring them into bondage,” says he, “to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.”‡ It cannot, therefore, we presume, be refused that soundness in the faith then delivered to the saints; professed submission to the divinely appointed ordinances of the Gospel; approbation of that church-order which Christ himself instituted, and authorized his minis-

* Acts, x.

† Acts, ii. 42.

‡ Gal. ii. 4, 5.

ters to observe; together with holiness of conversation, were positive terms of communion in the primitive Christian church.

We shall be told, "the principal term was, believing in Christ; which is certainly much more simple than the very complex, and intricate terms of later times." But however specious this objection may, at first sight, appear, if closely examined it will be found to be the fruit of inattention. While we speak of believing in Christ, the glorious object of faith must be considered in the same light, in which the Sacred Scriptures reveal him; and not as every individual may think proper to paint him in his own imagination. Who, then, is the Scripture-Christ, in whom we are to profess our faith; in order to our being admitted into the fellowship of his church? He is his Father's equal: "I and my Father are one."—The eternal Son of God: "God sent forth his Son"—Immanuel, *i. e.* having the two distinct natures of God and man, closely united in his own divine person: "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever"—set up from everlasting; and, voluntarily, undertaking the great work of redemption, as the covenant-Head and Surety of his people: "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world. Jesus was made a surety of a better testament. Lo, I come." Destined, in the eternal purposes of heaven, to undergo all those sufferings which he actually underwent, and in the very same manner, too: "For of a truth, against thy holy child, Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."—Actually manifested in the flesh, at the time appointed; made under the law, and suffering, substantially, the same punishment which his people's sin deserved, though himself without sin; in order that he might redeem them from the curse. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed."—The author and finisher of that law-magnifying righteousness, which is imputed to the believer, for his justification: "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;" in a word, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church: "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you. Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. He is given to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body." Strip the glorious object of our faith of any one of the

above precious characters, and you present unto us another Christ than the Scriptures reveal; and, therefore, one with whom Christians have nothing to do. Suppose, then, any should come unto us, denying the proper divinity of Christ, his eternal sonship; incarnation; substitution in the room of his people, or any other of his peculiar properties; we could not, consistently, receive them. Even the Apostolic term of admission, "If thou believest with all thine heart," when taken in the true spirit and scope of it, would oblige us to insert, in our terms of communion, the precious articles opposed; or to exhibit, and require assent, unto some plain summary of divine truth; evidently comprehending these, and whatever other things may, in a special manner, be called "the word of Christ's patience."

Considering, then, their consistency with the great and general principle, on which all societies in the world find it necessary to act; the express injunctions of the Holy Spirit, concerning unity of sentiment and profession; the doctrine of our Saviour, in his Epistles to the Asiatic churches; and the divinely authorized practice of the Apostolic church; we cannot well refuse the propriety of having explicit terms of admission to the privileges of the Gospel-church, in the times wherein we live.

Having said thus much, with respect to the terms of communion in general, it will now be necessary to turn our attention unto our own terms, in particular, and to offer a few remarks upon them as they lie in order.

EXPLANATION

AND

D E F E N C E .

TERMS OF MINISTERIAL AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNION AGREED UPON BY THE REFORMED PRESBYTERY :

I. THE acknowledgment of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice.

II. The acknowledgment of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to the Word of God.

III. The owning of divine right, and original of Presbyterian church-government.

IV. The acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National, and Solemn League. And, in consistency with this, acknowledging the Renovation of these Covenants, at Auchensaugh, 1712, to be agreeable unto the Word of God.

V. The owning of all the Scriptural Testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses ; whether martyrs, under the late persecution, or such as have succeeded them, in maintaining the same cause ; and especially of the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony, emitted by the Reformed Presbytery.

VI. Practically adorning the doctrine of God, our Saviour, by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

ON ARTICLE I.

THE first of these Terms respects the Scriptures of truth, as the alone infallible rule of faith and practice. Considering that we live in a land of Gospel-light, and are addressing ourselves to Christians, it is hoped that our readers, in general, will admit the propriety of this article. And never, surely, could it be more seasonable than in this "day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy ;" when Deistical opinions are making very alarming progress amongst mankind. Besides, it must ever be remem-

bered, that the sacred institutions of the gospel-church are to be found no where else but in the Holy Scriptures; hence a proper knowledge and belief of these becomes indispensably necessary, in maintaining church communion.

Believing the whole Bible to be given by inspiration of God, we take both the Old and New Testament into the account, as the great standard of human conduct in all periods of the church, and with regard to all duties, in every station and relation of life. We are sensible that the Jewish ritual is now abolished. It comprehended, in general, a system of bodily services, expressly denominated **CARNAL ORDINANCES, PATTERNS OF THINGS IN THE HEAVENS, AND SHADOWS OF GOOD THINGS TO COME**: while the substance, or body, is declared to be of Christ. Accordingly, these patterns, or types, must all be considered as finding their corresponding anti-type in the Messiah's gospel-kingdom. Excepting, then, whatever can be properly reduced to this description, and can be plainly shown to have been abolished by the coming of Christ, the rest must be viewed as of standing force to the end of the world. Whatever necessarily respects the gracious dispositions of the mind, and the inward exercises of the soul, or the moral conduct of men towards God, or towards one another, whether in civil or in ecclesiastic society, that must still, in the true scope and spirit of it, be understood as meant "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Nay, even from the ancient carnal ordinances, we may still draw many precious and instructive inferences, though these ordinances themselves are no longer to be observed. And we may also add, that it must remain still to be the indispensable duty of all Christians, diligently to search into the meaning of these ordinances; inasmuch as a competent knowledge of them is absolutely necessary to our right understanding of the great truths, concerning the Messiah, in the New Testament; many of which are delivered to us in typical language. While, therefore, the gospel-church standeth upon the joint foundation of Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,* she never can be supposed to let drop one of her terms of communion, a tenacious adherence to the Old Testament, as a part of the rule of her faith and practice, or to treat it like a thing of inferior importance, as the manner of some is.

Convinced of the self-evidencing power, intrinsic worth, and divine excellencies of the Holy Scriptures, we ever wish them to be considered as a complete and sufficient rule in themselves, independent of oral law, tradition of the fathers, or any human

* Eph. ii. 20.

invention whatever; and in opposition to the absurd notion, "That the true sense depends upon the church." At the same time, in our practical application of the inspired Oracles, we consider them to be the rule, as consistently understood, and properly applied. For, though they be an absolutely perfect and sufficient rule in themselves, yet it is possible to mistake their true meaning; but thus we endeavour to guard against the conduct of those who, while they pretend to believe in the divine authority of the Scriptures, do, meanwhile, evidently wrest them, imposing glosses which make one part of the Sacred Volume to contradict another, and which lead us away from the true scope and design of the whole.

ON ARTICLE II.

THE second Article of our Terms requires an owning of the doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. On this, also, we shall endeavour to give unto those who ask us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.

It is only after mature deliberation, carefully comparing them with the Word of God, and receiving full conviction in our own minds of their being wholly founded upon it, that we consider the Confession and Catechisms, or any other human composure whatever, as properly entitled to our belief, and deserving to be ranked amongst the subordinate standards of our church. But, after being convinced of their agreeableness to the infallible rule, we cheerfully receive them.

It is not with the remotest intention of supplying a defect in the Oracles of truth, which we ever consider as a complete rule in themselves; nor is it at all in the view of putting either the Confession, or any other book in the world, on a level with the Bible, that we adopt these explanatory standards; but purely to ascertain the true meaning of Scripture, help us to understand one another in our church-fellowship, and, through these mediums, to transmit a faithful testimony for truth, from generation to generation. Abundantly satisfied that they are remarkably useful for such purposes, we bless the Lord that ever we have had opportunity to adopt them.

The Confession and Catechisms, especially considering the distant period at which they were compiled, are, perhaps, the best guarded and the most accurately expressed composition to be found in our language; yet we do not view our general and sincere approbation of even the whole doctrines contained in them as necessarily involving the idea that every word is the best chosen, or every expression so properly guarded as it might

have been, had the authors known what objections were to be raised against them. But we do not wish to make these eminent men of God offenders for a word, or single incautious expression, when we have the fullest and plainest evidence for their real intention and leading design.

If any detached expressions in these standards should, at first sight, seem to be at variance with the doctrines taught in other parts of the same book, or with the plain and openly avowed sentiments, as well as the uniform practice of the compilers, on all other occasions, we consider the law of Christian charity as strongly binding us to explain the dubious-like expressions, by the plain and uniform doctrines of the same men, rather than to force our own meaning on the particular expressions, at the expense of making them contradict the clear and obvious doctrines, more fully illustrated in other parts of these authors' writings. Unless we go to work in this manner, no human composure of any considerable extent could ever pass without severe censure. Denied the benefit of this rule, many of the modern publications in favour of Christian forbearance might, and with far less straining too, than what is often employed in torturing our Confession, be pressed into the service of absolute scepticism and confusion. Yea, by taking hold of detached expressions, and refusing or neglecting to compare one place with another, the Holy Bible itself might soon be compelled to blaspheme, as hath frequently, indeed, been the case, while it has been in the hands of infidels and gross heretics.

To these standards themselves, and to our terms of communion requiring an approbation of them, it has been objected, "That they contain a discussion of the ordinance of civil government, and require Christians to take an active part in both the erection and management of it; whereas, civil government being an ordinance of man, and versant about the affairs of this life, properly belongs to the men of the world. Christians, therefore, being called out of the world, and sustaining the character of strangers and pilgrims, should mind objects of a spiritual nature, and never interfere with an institution of this kind." To this we answer, it is, indeed, a glorious truth that the Christian is, by the grace of God, called out of the world lying in sin, and is instructed to attend to matters of far superior importance than things terrene. But it is equally certain, that the new situation in which religion places him, neither deprives him of any rights, nor forbids the discharge of any duties which belong to him, as a man. It only qualifies him the better for the right management of these. In one sense, he is still a man of the world, being necessarily conversant about the affairs of this life, while obliged to form plans and labour for his temporal support. Connected in this manner with the world, and united

with fellow-men, he is, of course, induced to consult for the security of his person and property, which necessarily leads him to adopt the order of civil government; and when, like a Christian, he opens his Bible, to see what instructions on a subject of this kind he may derive from it; he there finds the sacred plan clearly laid before him, the ordinance of civil government delineated, in its divine original and ends; accomplishing, at once, the great purposes of security to person and property, the cultivation of morals, and the advancement of piety, together with the sovereign command of its divine Author to act accordingly. "Thou shalt provide, out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them. If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church."* Is it not to Christians that these and similar passages of Scripture are addressed? And doth not the addressing of them thus, on the great subject of civil government show the very intimate connexion which they have with it in all its concerns? But if so be the case, it can never be placed to the score of error, for these Confessions to attribute unto a Christian people the right and duty of interfering with the ordinance of civil government; nor can their doing so be reckoned inconsistent with the character of "strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

It hath also objected, "That these standards do not preserve the necessary distinction between church and state; and, consequently, grant to the civil magistrate by far too much power in ecclesiastical matters. This mistake," it is supposed, "hath arisen from not sufficiently attending to the difference between the Old and New Testament dispensations." But it should be remembered that a sinful and improper connexion between church and state could never be sanctioned by the God of infinite perfection, neither under one dispensation nor another. It will be no salvo to tell us, "That the carnal ordinances of the ceremonial law were once authorized by God himself, and yet it would be highly improper to observe them now." These, as we have already said, were shadows of good things to come; and, therefore, whenever the substance was enjoyed, could be no longer needed. But they were all innocent. None of them, surely, were "Antichristian, sinful, and absurd in their nature," as the connexion in question is often pronounced to be.

That the church is a free and distinct religious society, independent of any civil magistrate on earth; receiving all her laws from Christ alone; required to convene, adjourn and dissolve all her assemblies, from the highest to the lowest, in no other

* Exod. xviii. 21 1 Cor. vi. 4.

name than his; and taught to transact all her affairs, in virtue of that authority, which is derived from Him, as her alone Head and Lord, we firmly believe. It is also our fixed persuasion that no magistrate upon earth hath any judging, prescribing, dispensing or controlling power, either in or over the church of Christ, strictly considered in her ecclesiastic capacity. Nor have we yet seen any inconsistency between this, and, at the same time, teaching, as we ordinarily do, that, amongst a people favoured with the Word of God, bearing the Christian name, and having reached high attainments in state-reformation, it is requisite for the magistrate openly to profess and practice the true religion exclusively; not, indeed, as a thing to be judged by him according to his own fancy, but as already clearly judged and prescribed for him and his subjects both, by the unerring standard of that Lawgiver, who is the sovereign Lord of both his and their conscience. If the negligence of others, and concurring circumstances require, we reckon it also the part of the magistrate, possessing a holy zeal for the declarative glory of God, to excite the ministers of religion to do their duty, by meeting together in their assemblies, and diligently transacting the affairs of the church, according to their Lord's prescriptions. But the magistrate must not, upon any consideration whatever, interfere with their work when met, any other way than by protecting, defending and encouraging them in carrying it forward; and being himself present, if he please, to satisfy his own mind that they are acting according to the law of God. But judicially to pronounce any sentence, or, authoratively to call, adjourn, or dissolve them, in his own name, he hath no power in any case whatsoever. We consider it also to be the magistrate's province, formally and openly to declare his approbation of the church's righteous decisions, and his resolution to employ the authority and influence attaching unto his exalted station, for carrying these into effect. We are likewise of opinion that the magistrate may warrantably punish gross outward acts of vice and immorality, in general, whether they be transgressions of the first or of the second table of the moral law. Still, however, we apprehend that all this may be said and done without any improper blending of civil and religious things.

It is observable, that even under the Old Testament, which, in these matters at least, is now considered by many as entirely out of the question, the church and state were, by divine appointment, perfectly distinct. They had distinct judicatories, a civil and an ecclesiastic Sanhedrim. Their respective office-bearers were easily known and distinguished; judges and officers in the state, priests and Levites in the church. The causes tabled before their respective courts, and submitted to their de-

cisions, were different; civil matters in the one, and religious in the other. The pains and censures which they severally inflicted were also dissimilar; corporal punishments in the state, suspension from privileges and excommunication in the church. The rulers in the one were positively prohibited then, as well as now, from interfering with the work belonging to the rulers in the other. Hence that very explicit doctrine, "Behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all the matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters." And that severe reprimand, addressed to even a righteous king of Judah, "It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense."* Even under this dispensation, we see civil and religious things must be kept quite distinct. It is, indeed, expected that the office-bearers in both departments shall profess the true religion, act in the fear of the Lord, and co-operate in the prosecution of the same great and general object, the glorifying of God upon earth. But they must do it by acting, each in his own proper sphere, taking good heed that the one never intermeddle with that which properly belongs to the province of the other.

Our reforming forefathers, in Scotland especially, clearly perceived this distinction, and were very careful to have it observed, even in what is ordinarily called the first period of the reformation. Let them speak for themselves. "The power and policy ecclesiastical," say they, "is different and distinct in its own nature from that power and policy which is called civil power: albeit they be both of God, and tend to one end if they be rightly used, viz. to advance the glory of God, and to have godly and good subjects. The civil power is called the power of the sword, and the other the power of the keys. The magistrate commandeth external things, for external peace and quietness amongst the subjects; the minister handleth external things only for conscience' cause. The magistrate handleth external things only, and actions done before men; but the spiritual ruler judgeth inward affections and external actions, in respect of conscience, by the Word of God. The civil magistrate craves and gets obedience by the sword, and other external means; but the ministry by the spiritual sword and spiritual means. The magistrate neither ought to preach, minister the sacraments, nor execute the censures of the kirk, nor yet prescribe any rule how it should be done; but command the ministers to observe the rule commanded in the Word, and punish the transgressors by civil means. The ministers exer-

* 2 Chron. xix. 11, and xxvi. 18.

cise not the civil jurisdiction, but teach the magistrate how it should be exercised according to the Word. The magistrate ought to assist, maintain, and fortify the jurisdiction of the kirk. The ministers should assist their princes in all things agreeable to the Word, provided they neglect not their own charge by involving themselves in civil affairs.”* And again: the Commissioners of the kirk, addressing themselves to the king, very plainly tell him, “Although the persons of men are subject to your majesty and the civil judges when they offend against your laws, yet, in matters merely ecclesiastical, and concerning conscience, no Christian prince can justly claim, or ever claimed such a power to judge; seeing the prince in this behalf is but a member of the kirk, and Christ only the Head, who only hath power to give laws in matters of conscience. To confound the jurisdictions, civil and ecclesiastical, is that thing wherein all men of good judgment have justly found fault with the Pope of Rome, who claimeth to himself the power of both the swords.” Concerning the king’s act, annulling the excommunication of a Mr. Robert Montgomery, they observe, “To pronounce the sentence of excommunication against impenitent sinners, or absolve them from the same, or to decern the same, effectual or not effectual, can no more pertain to the prince or any civil magistrate, than to preach the Word and minister the sacraments; for they are both in like manner committed by Christ our Master to the true office-bearers within his kirk, when, as he said, “TELL IT TO THE CHURCH, &c.”†

The famous Mr. James Melville, in his reasons for not subscribing an Erastian writ, issued by the king and parliament, anno 1584, and required to be subscribed by the ministry, hath these remarkable words, when expostulating with those who had subscribed:—“Ye have taken away the lawful power, by your subscriptions, of pastors, doctors, and elders of the kirk, which they have to convene in the name and authority of Christ, the only sovereign Ruler and Commander of his kirk, for discharging of their duties and callings, which he hath laid on them, to be used for his service, and salvation of the souls of his people. And truly, as well might they have discharged the conventions, for hearing the Word and ministration of the sacraments, as for the exercise of discipline and government of the kirk; seeing the one is no less laid upon the back of the officers of Christ’s kingdom, as a special part of their duty and charge, than the other; and they have the command and power to use the one no less than the other, without waiting for any authority or command of

* 2d Book of Disc. chap. I. Agreed upon in Gen. Ass. 1578, and inserted in the Regis. of Ass. 1581.

† Animadversions presented by the Commissioners of the Kirk to the King at his Parl. in Linlithgow, Dec., 1585. Cald. Hist. p. 183, 192.

men. As freely as the king hath his power and authority of God the Creator to discharge his office in things civil and temporal; as freely have pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons in the kirk power and authority from Christ their Mediator to do their office, in things heavenly and spiritual:”—Doctrine marking a very clear distinction between church and state.

His brother, Mr. Andrew Melville, in like manner, addressing himself to the king, in a private conference between him and some ministers, makes bold to tell his prince, “Sir, there are two kings and two kingdoms. There is Christ and his kingdom the kirk, whose subject King James the sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a head, nor a lord, but a member; and they whom Christ hath called, and commanded to watch over his kirk, and govern his spiritual kingdom, have sufficient authority and power from him so to do, which no Christian king nor prince should control nor discharge, but fortify and assist.”* The two first of these extracts speak the sentiments of the ancient church of Scotland, collectively considered, in her public representatives; and the two last, the the sentiments of two valiant witnesses for the royal prerogatives of Christ, individually considered, but who, at the same time, spoke the language of many others, whose testimony could be produced were it necessary.

If we descend to the ever-memorable second period of the reformation, when our subordinate standards were composed, we will find the distinction between church and state very clearly taught and sanctioned by the highest authorities, in both the civil and religious departments. The Parliament of Scotland, Feb. 7, 1649, “Enact and ordain, that before the king who now is be admitted to the exercise of his royal power, he shall, among other things, consent and agree, that all matters civil be determined by the Parliaments of this kingdom, and all ecclesiastic matters by the General Assembly of this Kirk.” And it is well known, that when the king’s commissioner presumed to exercise an Erastian power over the church, by taking upon him, in his majesty’s name and authority, to dissolve that famous assembly of the church of Scotland which sat at Glasgow in the year 1638, they solemnly protested against that glaring encroachment on the royal prerogatives of Christ, the alone King of Zion; boldly asserted the church’s liberties, as a distinct, free, and independent, spiritual kingdom; and went forward with their work in the face of the royal proclamation, and many other daring threatenings, issued out against them. In the Hundred and Eleven Propositions, drawn up by order of the General Assembly, 1645, our reformers declare, “The civil

* Cald. Hist. p. 167,—8. and 329.

power and the ecclesiastic ought not, by any means, to be confounded or mixed together." Accordingly, they go on, with much judgment and accuracy, to draw the line of distinction between the two, in a considerable number of particulars.

Add to these the express doctrine of the standards themselves, "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate."* Agreeably to this, the London ministers assert, "As the church and state are distinct polities, so have they subjects, laws, and officers, distinct always in the formal conception, though materially in divers things they may agree. A preacher and a judge are two distinct callings."† In like manner the Scots Commissioners, when they were sent to treat with the king, amidst the public disturbances in 1639, and were asked, what they particularly wanted, requested, amongst other things, "That all matters ecclesiastical might be determined by the assemblies of the church, and matters civil by parliament."‡

Should any still venture to affirm, "that our worthy reformers had no just ideas of the distinction between church and state, but inconsiderately blended these together; they must do it at the expense of manifesting their ignorance, or deep-rooted prejudice, or both. To teach that magistrates and ministers should both be qualified according to the Word of God, professing the true religion, and using their best endeavours, in their respective stations, to promote the declarative glory of God amongst men, is one thing; and to teach that the one of these powers may warrantably interfere with the business of the other, is quite another thing. The former was done by our forefathers; but to the latter they would never subscribe, reckoning it rather their duty to resist unto blood, striving against sin.

Nor is it inconsistent with this for them to say, "That the magistrate hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire," and so on: and to grant, "That he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God."|| Let the whole paragraph be taken in connexion. It begins with positively refusing to the magistrate any right to "assume to himself administration of word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven." *i. e.* He must by no means interfere with either the doctrine and worship, or the discipline and government of Christ's house.

* Westm. Confess. chap. 30. † Divine Right of Gosp. Minis. p. 66. ‡ Steven. Hist. vol. ii, p. 741. || Westm. Conf. chap. 23, sect. 3.

Consequently, they never dreamed of allowing him to sit as judge upon any of these.* No; he is only to take particular notice, that those things which are already judged and determined by the law of the God of heaven, and, in conformity to that law agreed upon by the church's representatives, be all faithfully observed in their proper place. Let the passages of Scripture cited in proof be carefully attended to, and they make the meaning clear as noon-day. In these passages, those that were over the king's matters are expected to keep in their own sphere; while those priests and Levites who were over the matters of the Lord are required to observe the province which the God of the church had appointed for them. Good Jehoshaphat, on this memorable occasion, assumes no judging or legislative power, at least in church matters; but merely prompts and excites the whole office-bearers, in both departments, conscientiously to discharge the important duties of their respective stations, according to the rules already prescribed by God himself. In this sense, surely, a Christian magistrate may safely "take order, that whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven."

Suppose, that an honourable master, having a great number of servants, in different capacities, under his authority, were to appoint for some of them a certain piece of important work, and pointedly to prescribe the whole plan to be scrupulously observed in carrying it forward, but, at the same time, were to require another servant to take notice that they faithfully observed their lord's prescriptions, we would not, certainly, from that, conclude that the person taking such oversight, for the time, was the proper judge how the work was to be done, or the author of the regulations to be observed by the performers of it. The application to the case before us is abundantly obvious. As to the magistrate's power of calling synods, and being present at them, our reformers explain themselves in the 51st of the above mentioned propositions. "The magistrate," say they, "calleth together synods, not as touching those things which are proper to synods, but in respect of the things which are common to synods, with other meetings, and civil public assemblies; *i. e.* not as they are assemblies, in the name of Christ, to treat of matters spiritual, but as they are public assemblies within his territories."

But even supposing it should be rather a stretch for our Assembly to signify, as they do in their act at Edinburgh, Aug. 27, 1647, "That the necessity of occasional assemblies should

* In the above mentioned Animadversions, our reformers say, "It is a great fault to a civil magistrate to JUDGE upon doctrine, errors and heresies; he not being placed in ecclesiastical function, to interpret the Scriptures." Cald. Hist. p. 188.

first be remonstrate to the magistrate, by humble supplication, before the church use her intrinsic power in calling them." Yet why torture a single unguarded expression? seeing, in the very same sentence, they plainly teach, "That it is free for the church to assemble together synodically, as well *PRO RE NATA*, as at the ordinary times, by the intrinsical power received from Christ, as long as it is necessary for the good of the church so to assemble." Besides, it was evidently their intention by this act, to preserve, on their part, the amicable correspondence, which should ever exist between church and state; and, at the same time, to prevent the odium which might otherwise attach to their meetings in these troublesome times, as though they were designed to promote some seditious plans, which they wished to conceal from the present government.

The subordinate standards, of which we speak, especially our solemn Covenants, are also charged with favouring compulsory measures, even in matters purely religious. And hence it is supposed, that our reformers did not properly understand the rights of private judgment, nor the proper spirit of our Saviour's doctrine, "That his kingdom is not of this world." Neither this, nor the above mentioned, are new objections. All of them, and many others besides, were urged, if not with greater, at least, with as much plausibility as they are now, more than a hundred years ago. They were also very ably answered by the reformers themselves, though many of the publications on that subject are now to be obtained with difficulty, and some of them not at all.

It is given as the character of the upright man, that he will not be readily disposed even to take up a reproach against his neighbour.* But it is matter of regret, in our time, that many will swallow with greediness bold and totally unfounded assertions, in opposition to the covenants and work of reformation; while they will scarcely grant a hearing to strong and incontestible proof in their favour. If one, speaking at random, should tell them, "Our reformers were for propagating their religion by fire and sword. They went about, with the covenants in the one hand and the sword in the other, giving men their choice;" at once the malicious tale is believed; opinions and principles are formed upon it; though, all the while, a grosser calumny never existed. Our reformers, in the possession of their religious, as well as civil liberties, taught the propriety of *DEFENDING* themselves by arms, when they were wickedly attacked, and attempts made to rob them of their valuable rights; but to the doctrine of actively propagating religion by the sword they were totally strangers. Let not our law

* Psalm, xv. 3.

condemn any man before it hear him, lest the Heathen themselves rise against us, in the judgment.

With regard to the National Covenant of Scotland, respectable men, of indefatigable industry and unwearied research have solemnly declared, that, after a laborious investigation, they could find no proper evidence that any force was ever used in Scotland to make any take the Covenant, except in 1639, by Montrose and Monro, two military men, without any warrant from church or state.* These two officers, whose zeal in this affair was not according to knowledge, and who acted beyond their commission, afterwards appeared in their true colours, as dangerous enemies to the work of reformation. But the unwarranted act of an individual or two can never be justly charged upon the great body, openly and honestly disavowing all such conduct.

Messrs. Henderson, Dickson, and Cant, these eminent servants of Christ, distinguished in 1638 by their public spirit, in valiantly promoting the covenanted interest, make free to assert, "No pastors in our knowledge have been either forced to flee, or have been threatened with the want of their stipends, for refusing their subscription. Arguments have been taken from promised augmentation of stipends to hinder subscription. Fear of worldly loss rather hinders men to subscribe, than scruples of conscience. In this day of the Lord's power, his people have most willingly offered themselves in multitudes like the dew of the morning. Others, of no small note, have offered their subscriptions, and have been refused till time should try their sincerity from love to the cause, and not from the fear of man. No threatenings have been used, except of the deserved judgments of God, nor force, except the force of reason, from the high respects which we owe to religion, to our king, to ourselves, and to our posterity."† Speaking of the remarkable cheerfulness with which the covenant was almost universally subscribed, in 1638, says a pious writer on the subject, "They resolved upon renewing the National Covenant, which had been almost buried for forty years before. Being read in churches, it was heartily embraced, sworn, and subscribed by all ranks, with many tears and great joy; so that the whole land, great and small, a very few excepted, WITHOUT ANY COMPULSION FROM CHURCH OR STATE, did, in a few months, cheerfully return to their ancient principles, and subject themselves to the oath of God for reformation."‡ On this memorable occasion, we see, compulsory measures were neither needed nor employed.

After the treaty at Birks, in 1639, when "the king complain-

* Brown's Lett. on Toleration, p. 151.

† Ans. to Doctors of Aberdeen, p. 42, 44.

‡ Willison's Testimony, p. 7.

ed that the Scots still kept up unlawful meetings, who pressed the subjects daily to adhere to the covenant. Lord Loudon answered, that no meetings were kept up by them but such as were agreeable to the acts of parliament; and although they behoved to adhere to their covenant, as most necessary and lawful, yet they averred, that none had, to their knowledge, been urged to subscribe it.”* As the king, at this time, strongly urged the abjuring of the covenant, our worthy reformers, considering its obligation as indissoluble, judged it seasonable, when necessity pointed out the duty of trying who were friends or foes, to offer the covenant for subscription to such of the lords of Session as had not already subscribed it. The result was, that the most of them refused it. Yet, even these historians who are well known to disapprove of the covenant, cannot so much as pretend that ever the least violence was offered to the recusants; “yea,” adds our author, “this had been a practical contradiction to what the covenanters had all along declared.”† Are these the men who wished to propagate the religion of Jesus by the sword of steel?

In the progress of the reformation, our noble ancestors still declare themselves the friends of that properly bounded liberty, wherewith Christ hath made his people free. The express words of the standards themselves are, “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to the Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.”‡ They evidently consider God alone as the sovereign Lord of the conscience; and, at the same time, the conscience of every man as subject to his righteous law. Accordingly, whenever the public regulations of either church or state are actually brought to this unerring rule, fully demonstrated to be agreeable unto it, and not only so, but also solemnly ratified by the mutual consent of the representatives in either department, then all become obliged to conform: not in virtue of some men’s claim to exercise lordship over the conscience of others, but in virtue of the divine authority, speaking through the medium of scriptural regulations; in virtue of that mutual consent, by which these regulations were adopted; and in virtue of that responsibility, not only to God but also to one another, which is inseparable from the very existence of all society, whether civil or ecclesiastic. After this, for individuals or malignant factions, under the pretence of conscience and the right of private judgment, to rise up in open rebellion against the established authorities, is evidently to fight, not only against men, but against God himself.

* Steven. Hist. vol. 3, p. 761.
Cont. chap. 20, sect. 2.

† Steven. Hist. vol. 2, p. 709.

‡ Westmin.

This was exactly the case in those troublesome times, when the Confession and covenants were composed. And it is to men of this description that our worthy reformers refer, when, in the 4th sect. of this same chap. they say, "Because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another, they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God." Such are the persons who, they say, "may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate." It is in this sense, likewise, that our Testimony is to be understood, when it approves of proceeding against some atrocious offenders, not only by church censures, but also by the power of the magistrate. That both the civil and the ecclesiastical authority of that time agreed to have the covenants enforced by civil, as well as ecclesiastical pains, is not refused. But let the case be truly stated, and it is hoped that the seeming inconsistency of this will soon vanish.

The public calamity under which the nation then groaned was twofold; strong opposition to the true reformed religion, as openly professed in the church, and malignant plotting against the fundamental laws and liberties of the state. Both these evils were combined in the malicious conduct of many restless and formidable factions in the land. The enemies, with whom the covenanters had to do were not simply chargeable with heretical opinions, peaceably retained with themselves, but with heretical opinions, manifested, supported, and propagated, in a seditious and treasonable manner. This is attested by the preamble to the Solemn League and Covenant itself, the well authenticated histories of that period, and other unexceptionable vouchers.—"The miseries of Ireland," says Mr. Henderson, who was personally concerned in framing the League, "and the distresses of England, and the dangers of the kingdom of Scotland growing to greater extremity, the convention of estates, upon their meeting, received information of divers treacherous attempts of Papists in all the three kingdoms."* The Westminster Assembly, in their exhortation to the taking of the covenant, expect many cheerfully "To join in this happy Bond, for putting an end to the present miseries, and for saving both the king and kingdom from utter ruin, now so strongly and openly laboured by the POPISH FACTION, and such as have been bewitched and besotted by that viperous and bloody generation."† Speaking concerning false kinds of peace, Mr.

* Coll. of Sermon. Speeches, &c. p. 104. Edit. Glas. 1741.

† *Id.* p. 374.

Tesdale, a member of the Assembly, observes, "You may soon discover here the peace of our adversaries, the agreement of Atheists and Papists, Priests and Prelates, Irish rebels and English traitors to ruin church and commonwealth."*

We see, then, that the persons of whom the malignant factions were composed sustained a double character; they were, at once, obstinate gainsayers of the truth as it is in Jesus, and seditious enemies to the state. The remedy behoved to be suited unto the disease. Accordingly, we find, that the Solemn League, though loosely taken, it may be considered as a religious covenant, yet, when strictly viewed, is evidently a complex oath, containing, not only a religious vow, to be for God and not for another; but also an oath of allegiance to the civil government, in the defence of the nation's precious liberties. No wonder, then, that the censures be also twofold, civil, and ecclesiastical pains. But were they administered indiscriminately, and out of their proper place? By no means. Considered simply as obstinate enemies to the religion of Jesus, or as scandalous in their practice, the offenders were brought before the church, and proceeded against by her censures, sometimes even to excommunication. But proving, as many of them did, still irreclaimable, and persisting in their seditious and treasonable measures, they were also considered as rebels in the state; and were then, and not sooner, delivered over to the civil power, to be punished accordingly. Is it not still the custom, and reckoned a warrantable custom too, to punish seditious and treasonable persons with civil pains?

It will, no doubt, be objected, "Why did our reformers give their covenant this form; could they not have framed two distinct covenants, or oaths, the one civil, and the other religious?" To this we reply, that, from the calamitous circumstances of the time, they could scarcely be considered as having proper room left for a choice in that respect. The complex evil, and the double character, were already before them; and, therefore, they framed their covenant so as to meet the double danger. They might, indeed, have split it into two, and sworn the one on the one day, and the other on the other. But where would have been the substantial difference? If things are kept distinct in themselves, and each observed in its own place, though they should be done by the same men, and on the same general occasion, the harm cannot be very great. Doth not the Christian, acting in character, perform both civil and religious duties every day of his life? Why, then, may he not, in the same covenant, solemnly engage to do both?

But, in order to substantiate the charge of compulsory mea-

* Sermon before Parliament, Aug. 28. 1644. p. 6.

tures in matters of religion, a character must be found exactly of the following description :—A person, in every other respect a peaceable and inoffensive member of society, propagating no opinions, nor chargeable with any practices injurious to the peace and happiness of mankind; but only found to entertain some religious scruples in his own mind about the propriety of the covenants, or such like, in all other respects harmless. If it can be proved that men of this description had corporal punishments inflicted upon them, by the authority of church and state, it will be doing something to the purpose. But all arguing from the complex character, without attending to the distinctions observed by our reformers themselves, is evidently inconclusive.

As it is a subject of much discussion in our times, we crave the attention of our readers to a few additional extracts, out of many, which might be produced in defence of the ancient Covenanters against the charge of unwarrantable compulsion in matters purely religious.

The famous assembly at Westminster, in their exhortation to the taking of the covenants, when answering the objection about the extirpation of Prelacy, positively declare, “Nor is any man hereby bound to offer any violence to their persons, but only in his place and calling to endeavour their extirpation in a lawful way.”* This exhortation was read and approved in the English House of Commons.

Mr. Coleman, a member of the Assembly, in reply to the query, “Whether by any law, divine or human, may reformation of religion be brought in by arms?” says, “I answer negatively, It is not. The sword is not the means which God hath ordained to propagate the gospel; Go and teach all nations; not, Go and subdue all nations, is our Master’s precept.”†

Mr. Caryl, another member of the Assembly, and whose praise is also in the churches, in his sermon, at a public convention for the taking of the covenant, hath these very plain and expressive words, “Where conscience is indeed unsatisfied, we should rather pity than impose, and labour to persuade rather than violently to obtrude.”‡

Mr. Palmer, also a member of the Assembly, and an able advocate for the covenanted interest, thus ingenuously teacheth, “I know a difference is to be put, when we come to deal with persons tainted with dangerous opinions. Some are to be handled with all compassionate tenderness, as being scrupled through weakness and infirmity; but others, who are not only obstinate, but active to seduce and breed confusion, must be saved with fear, as pulling them out of the fire, and that they

* Col. of Sermon. p. 375. † *Id.* p. 152. ‡ *Id.* p. 179.

may set others on fire also. Though still a spirit of meekness is requisite, even toward such, in regard to their persons.”*

Mr. Thorowgood, who also ranks in the honourable list of Westminster Divines, very honestly declares his sentiments on the subject. “Fierce and furious prosecution,” says he, “even of a good cause, is rather prejudice than promotion. We must tenaciously adhere to all divine truths ourselves, and with our wisest moderation labour to plant and propagate them in others. Opposites, indeed, must be opposed, gainsayed, reclaimed; but all must be done in a way, and by the means appointed from heaven. It is one thing to show moderation to pious, peaceable, and tender consciences; it is another thing to proclaim beforehand toleration to impious, fiery, and unpeaceable opinions. Let moderation be so much awake, that discipline fall not asleep. The Papists, indeed, expect your moderation, and surely such should be shown them as may preserve your lives, and the kingdoms from their frauds and cruelties. Though their religion, like Draco’s laws, be written in blood, yet none of them ever suffered death among us, merely for religion.”† One extract more shall at present suffice.

Mr. Gillespie, our young, but singularly judicious commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, meets this objection, “Why are we forced and compelled into the covenant?” “Answer 1. If any known malignant, or complier with the rebels, or with any enemy of this cause, hath been received either to the covenant or sacraments without signs of repentance, I mean such as men in charity ought to be satisfied with, for their former malignancy and scandal, it is more than ministers and elderships can answer, either to God, or to the acts and constitutions of this national church. I trust all faithful and conscientious ministers have laboured to keep themselves pure in such things. 2. Men are not otherwise drawn or forced into the covenant, than into other necessary duties. Nay, it ought not to be called a forcing or compelling. Are men forced to spare their neighbour’s life because murder is severely punished? Or are men compelled to be loyal because traitors are exemplarily punished? There may and must be a willingness and freeness in the doing of the contrary duty, although great sins must not go unpunished. Men are not compelled to virtue because vice is punished, else virtue were not virtue. Those that refuse the covenant, reproach it, or rail against it, ought to be looked upon as enemies to it, and dealt with accordingly; yet, if any man were known to take the covenant against his will, he were not to be received.”‡

* Serm. bef. Parl. Aug. 13, 1644. p. 55.

† Serm. bef. Parliam. Dec. 25, 1644

p. 15, 21.

‡ Miscel. Quest. p. 191, 192

Such sentiments plainly show that our reformers were pretty well acquainted with the nature of Christ's spiritual kingdom, Christian liberty, and the rights of conscience; and that they would suffer little, or rather nothing at all, by a comparison with the most enlightened modern writers on the subjects. It is hoped that our readers will carefully observe that the doctrines contained in the above extracts, of which kind many more can be produced, were not spoken in a corner, or amongst a few select friends: they were delivered in the most open manner, and before the most public associations, composed of all ranks and degrees of men in the kingdom. They were heard, approved, and ordered to be published, by the highest authorities in church and state; at the very time when, in their respective places and stations, they were employed in taking and enforcing the covenants.

To an unbounded liberty for every man to think and act as he pleases, even in contempt of righteous laws, whether human or divine, these champions for truth were, indeed, strangers; but of liberty, without licentiousness, they seem to have had pretty correct ideas. A modern writer, whose sentiments in general appear to be abundantly liberal, and who will not very readily be convicted of narrow-mindedness or bigotry, says, "I denominate that a state of liberty in which every man's person, property, and free agency, is secured or circumscribed by laws which have been agreed to by the majority of the people at large, either in their own persons, or by a representation primarily and tacitly, if not expressly allowed by the people. Salutary restraint," he adds, "is the very principle of liberty; and they who, from their restless disposition, or from misapprehension, endeavour to throw off every species of coercion, are in reality enemies to that freedom which they pretend to promote."* He is speaking chiefly of civil liberty, as circumscribed by the salutary laws of the state; but the same doctrine, substantially, will apply to religious liberty, as circumscribed by the righteous laws of Christ in the church. The covenants respect both. And, however much our reformers might have differed from this author on some other topics, it is obvious that, with respect to coercion, or legal restraint, they ordinarily acted upon the same general principle which he here recognizes. The covenants, and other corresponding public deeds of that time, were the result of general and mature deliberation. They were adopted by the mutual consent of the nation's representatives at large, both in church and state. In obtaining this consent, our worthy forefathers insisted much and frequently on the propriety of acting from judgment and conscience. They showed

* Knox's Essays, vol. 1, p. 54, — 5.

much holy diligence to have all ranks of men well informed concerning the nature, the warrantableness, and the seasonableness of such covenants. If any, otherwise peaceable and inoffensive subjects, in church and state, had religious scruples in their own mind, both the open doctrine and uniform practice of our pious ancestors recommended all possible tenderness, in labouring to have these removed. But, on the other hand, when cruel Popish factions, under the fair pretence of only claiming a liberty to serve God, in their own way, were plotting the utter ruin of both church and state, and seeking the overthrow of all laws, human and divine; in such a case, indeed, they could not help thinking that salutary restraint and well regulated coercion were indispensably necessary. And what nation under heaven, properly consulting her own own safety and happiness in time of danger, would not find it advisable to act on the same great principle?

But after all, even though we should allow that some acts of council, of parliament, or of assembly, are expressed in terms too rigorous, and manifest rather too much keenness to have the covenants imposed on all men in the kingdom, whether reason were or none, how does that affect the cause? Whatever high opinion we may have of these acts, in general, they were never incorporated into our standards or testimonies; nor is the approbation of them ever imposed on any person, as a term of admission to the privileges of the church. We never asserted that, even in the best period of reformation, the church was perfect; or, that every particular measure, on every occasion and in every place, whether in England or Scotland, was, in all its circumstances, defensible and proper. The Confession, and Covenants themselves, are neither the better nor the worse for the manner in which they were at first enforced. It hath been a received maxim in all ages that, amidst great and public dangers, some severe laws have been enacted, rather with the design of striking terror into restless opposers, than with the view of being literally executed in every instance of transgression. If we be really the friends of our covenanting ancestors, how is it that we will not make the same allowances for them which have been made for all other men in similar circumstances, ever since the world began?

Should any, to excuse their opposition, say, "They have nothing to do with the above, or with any other sentiments of our reformers, in the rest of their writings, the plain language of the standards themselves warrants their objections;" it is evident this amounts to the same thing as to say, that they have nothing to do with Christian candour, or that charity which thinketh no evil, but rather teacheth us to hear even our opponent to an amen, and to allow him the liberty of explaining

himself. Were the objectors to find detached expressions, selected from their writings or speeches, and tortured in the most unmerciful manner, without admitting their connexion with the otherparts of the same writings, or with the uniform practice of the same men, it is presumed that they would embrace the earliest opportunity of claiming that same liberty for themselves which they, very unreasonably, refuse to our reformers.

Fully satisfied, therefore, that the contents of our Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, are agreeable to the Word of God; finding such dubious-like expressions, as may seem, at first sight, rather to favour unwarrantable coercion, to be very clearly explained in other writings of the same men; and convinced that both the ancient and modern objections against them are ill founded; we reckon it still our duty, and expect it of all who wish to hold communion with us, to approve, and adhere to them, substantially, as they stand.

ON ARTICLE III.

THIS article requires our assent to the divine right and original of Presbyterian church government.

As the great body of the inhabitants of Scotland profess themselves Presbyterians; the propriety of this article, it is hoped, will not be much disputed; but though it should, it doth not comport with our present design to enlarge on the subject.

That the power of church discipline and government is not lodged in the community of the faithful at large, but is entrusted to the office-bearers, or public and regularly installed ministry of the church, appears perfectly obvious from the distinction which is constantly made, through the whole of the New Testament, between the spiritual rulers, called to labour in Word and doctrine, or to rule with diligence, and those who are to be subject to them in the Lord, obeying them, and esteeming them highly in love, for their works' sake. It is no less evident from our Lord's words, addressed to the apostle Peter, and his fellow-disciples, now solemnly called and set apart to the work of the ministry, by himself, as King upon the holy hill of Zion. "Upon this rock," says he, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou

shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”* The same thing is also manifest from those inspired epistles, addressed to the angels or ministry of the churches in Asia. The ministry in one of these churches is sharply reprovèd for retaining in communion persons who were erroneous and openly scandalous; while the ministry of another is much commended for casting them out: †—Plainly importing, that the power of ministerially binding and loosing, in the name, and according to the laws of Christ, was lodged with them.

That lesser ecclesiastical courts, of more limited inspection and jurisdiction, should consider themselves as subordinated unto greater courts, where there are more counsellors, and, consequently, the higher probability of safety, in passing such decisions as are of general concern, is sufficiently obvious from the sacred description of that venerable synod which met at Jerusalem in the days of the Apostles.‡ While it perfectly harmonizes with the nature, and comely order of all society in general. And,

That the church’s adored Head allows no superiority to any one individual minister of the Gospel above another, but considers them all as brethren of equal authority, is clear as noon-day, from his own express and very pointed language. “Ye know,” says he, “that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you. One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”§ The indiscriminate use of the words BISHOP and PRESBYTER, in the New Testament, to signify one and the same official character, and the granting to a judicial meeting of presbyters the power of ordination, which is the highest power claimed in the church, also proclaim the equality of Gospel ministers.

The Presbyterian form of church government, therefore, agreeably to our subordinate standards, seems to be the only form which can properly claim a divine original. It makes a distinguished part of the faith once delivered to the saints in these covenanted isles of the sea. In the support and defence of it, our pious and venerable ancestors made a noble stand, many of them resisting unto blood, striving against sin, and not reckoning their lives dear unto themselves; if so be they might transmit it, in its original simplicity and purity, to the rising race, as the divinely appointed and comely order of Christ’s house. We, accordingly, consider it as still deserving a place in our terms of admission to the privileges of the church. Those

* Matt. xvi. 18, 19. † Rev. ii. ‡ Acts, xv. § Matt. xx. 25, 26, and xxiii. 8; 1 Pet. v. 3.

who wish to see its claim to a divine original fully demonstrated by strong and conclusive arguments, may consult, among others, the publications mentioned at the foot of the page.*

ON ARTICLE IV.

THE fourth article respects the perpetual obligation of our solemn Covenants, and the propriety of the Renovation at Auchensaugh, 1712.

The great and important duty of public covenanting, even in New Testament times, hath been so fully illustrated, and clearly defended in many publications, both ancient and modern, that we reckon it quite superfluous to enter into a discussion of the subject here.

While we firmly believe that the public covenants of ancient Israel comprehended great and important moral duties, equally incumbent upon men, in all periods of the church; while we find that the first commandment of the moral law, in the true scope of it, requires us to avouch the Lord to be our God, and to persevere in his worship and service, the very substance of all proper religious covenanting; while we cannot refuse, that the third commandment, rightly understood, plainly teaches us to fear the Lord our God, and, when lawfully called unto it, to swear by his name; while we read many precious predictions in the Old Testament, fortelling that, in the days of the Messias, men should subscribe with their hand unto the Lord, vow a vow unto him and perform it, and should say, Come, and let us join ourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten; and while we find, that every baptized Christian, taking the Bible into his hand, as the rule of his faith and practice, sitting down at the holy table of the Lord, and opening his mouth in a public profession of the Christian religion, evidently doth what is to all intents and purposes substantially the same with solemn covenanting; though we had no other arguments for it, we cannot withhold our consent to the propriety of our ancestors' conduct, in taking the burden upon them for themselves and their posterity, that they would be for God, and not for another: in the believing improvement of his gracious

* The Grand Debate; The Divine Right of Church Government, by the London Ministers; The Due Right of Presbyteries, by Mr. Rutherford: Letters on the Constitution, Government, and Discipline of the Christian Church, by Mr. Brown; A Short Vindication of Presbyterial Church-Government, by Mr. Whytock.

promise, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

A very slight attention to our solemn covenants will serve to show that the matter of them is Scriptural, and that, therefore, they may be safely sworn.

As to the National Covenant of Scotland, its great object is, evidently, the renouncement of Popery, together with all superstitions of the same description. But if the church of Rome be the mystical Babylon of the New Testament, if the Romish church indeed be false, blasphemous, idolatrous, bloody, soul-ruining, and deceitful, as hath often been abundantly proved, and as the Presbytery have shown in their "Testimony and Warning against Popery,"* then the divine injunction applies, in its full force, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Our obedience to this sovereign command is very properly testified, by seriously swearing, in the name and strength of the Lord, never to touch the unclean thing.

A great many acts of parliament are introduced into this National Covenant. The reason is sufficiently obvious. Our reformers, at that time, were considered by many as taking too much upon them, acting beyond their commission, and laying themselves open to the charge of seditious conduct. In their own vindication, they quoted these numerous acts, to prove that they were doing nothing but what was authorized by the fundamental laws of the kingdom, as well as by the Word of God. If those who approve of the Covenant have an opportunity of seeing and reading these acts, for their own satisfaction, it is well, they should certainly embrace the opportunity. At the same time, though they should never have it in their power to see one of them, yet it is practicable for them to swear the covenant itself, in truth, in righteousness, and in judgment. They have the body of the solemn deed, and may, at all times, compare it with the infallible standard of right and wrong.

It is also observable, that, in describing the various abominations of Popery, the National Covenant employs many terms, which, though familiar to the church of Rome, that mystery of iniquity, yet cannot well be supposed to be fully understood by every Protestant reader, who may consent unto the covenant. This much, however, he may see at once, that these strange and antisciptural terms must be descriptive of such human inventions as are entirely beside the Word of God, being added to the things contained in that sacred book; and, therefore, ought to be rejected. An instance or two will serve to illus-

trate this. We renounce "His five bastard sacraments." Every one probably does not know that these are "marriage, ordination, confirmation, penance, and extreme unction;" but Christians, in general, can very easily know that the only sacraments in the New Testament are Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and, consequently, that no institution besides can ever consistently be admitted as a proper sacrament. Mention is made of the Pope's "Shavellings." There may, possibly, be many sincere believers in the Protestant churches who cannot tell that these mean his "monks or friars, of different orders, who have their heads shaven in different forms, to mark their distinguished pretended holiness;" but all may know that no such orders were ever appointed by Christ, and, therefore, the doctrine respecting them can make no part of the faith delivered to the saints. The same may be said of all the other Antichristian abominations. Meanwhile, it is not intended to discourage, but rather to recommend such proper researches after the knowledge of these things as may enable us to oppose them with judgment and precision.

Turning our attention to the Solemn League of the three nations, we find that in the first article we engage to preserve the true reformed religion where it is already established, and to carry forward the reformation where it is not yet completed. Say not the Scriptures that this is our duty? "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast. Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."*

In the second article, we profess to use our best endeavours, without partiality, for the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness. All these have, oftentimes, been clearly proved to be gross corruptions of JEHOVAH's worship, and open violations of his holy law; concerning which his express language is, "Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump. Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."†

In the third article, we undertake to preserve the rights and privileges of the civil authorities, in the preservation and defence

* Phil. iii. 16; Rev. iii. 3; Heb. vi. 1; Tit. i. v. † Deut. xii. 31, 32; 1 Cor. v. 7; Matt. xv. 13.

of true religion, and liberties of the kingdoms. Nothing can be more consonant to the divine injunctions, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. He is the minister of God to thee for good. But, if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he is a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. Pay ye tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."* In these passages the lawful authority, official character, and important duty of the magistrate, are inseparably connected with the people's obedience and support.

In article fourth, we solemnly resolve to employ our endeavours for discovering, and bringing seasonably to condign punishment, all such incendiaries and malignants as wickedly hinder the reformation, and foment divisions in the kingdoms. Which is nothing more than what the Lord himself requires, when he says, "Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor. Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."†

In article fifth, we swear to do what we can in our respective places, for preserving, to all posterity, the settled peace and union of the kingdoms. The union principally intended respects the common faith, delivered to the saints, in all its branches; and, therefore, the endeavouring to keep it exactly corresponds to the inspired recommendation, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace."‡

In the last article of this League, we bind ourselves to assist and defend each other, and jointly to persevere in prosecuting the great ends of the covenant, without giving place to indifference or defection. God himself certainly commands so much. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel. Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."§

To covenants, the matter of which is so evidently agreeable to the unalterable precepts of the moral law, we may safely apply the inspired Apostle's language, "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto."|| Indeed, if it can once be proved, as it has often been, in the most convincing manner, that the church, as such, as well as men in other capacities, may warrantably enter into

* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14; Rom. xiii. 4, 6. † Jerem. xxi. 12; Song, ii. 15; Phil. iii. 2.
‡ Eph. iv. 3. § Gal. vi. 2; Phil. i. 27; 1 Cor. xv. 58. || Gal. iii. 15.

public scriptural covenants at all, their obligation must necessarily be perpetual; inasmuch as the church, collectively considered, is still the same permanent society, which can never die; though the individuals, of whom she may have been composed, in any given period, should be no more. And, if even civil deeds amongst men, when they are legally executed, bind not only the persons presently entering into them, but them, their heirs, and successors to all generations; much more must we consider these religious covenants, which are executed according to the revealed will of our heavenly Lawgiver, to be binding not only upon the generation of the church, more immediately entering into them, but also on their heirs and successors to the end of the world.

Concerning these covenants, some have proposed the query, "In what sense can they be said, as they are in our Testimony, to be of divine authority or obligation?" We reply, The divine authority of heaven's great Sovereign is, evidently, interposed, in requiring us to enter into such covenants, "Vow unto the Lord your God." And when once we have entered into them, the same divine authority binds us to performance, "Pay that which thou hast vowed." Add to these, that the great and dreadful name, **THE LORD OUR GOD** is invoked in the solemn transaction, while his declarative glory among men is deeply concerned in the faithful fulfilment of our engagements. So that, besides the intrinsic obligation of the covenants, viewed simply as human deeds, whereby men bind their souls, there is, in all such covenants, an obligation of divine authority, requiring first to make, and then to perform our covenants; from the invocation of the divine name, considering **JEHOVAH** as witness and avenger, and from the interfering with the divine glory, in the keeping or violating of our oath. Hence, in the Scripture, the same oath is, in one respect, considered as the covenant of the man giving his hand; and, in another respect, as the Lord's covenant, whose glory is concerned in it.* Our Testimony, if properly attended to, explains itself; telling us, the covenants "are of divine authority, or obligation, **AS HAVING THEIR FOUNDATION UPON THE WORD OF GOD.**"†

Some have also questioned, "Whether or not the covenants can properly lay us under any additional obligations to duty, besides what we are already under, from the divine law?" In all disputes, the explaining of our terms is highly requisite. If by additional or superadded obligation be meant something introduced to supply a defect, or to bind where we were at liberty, it is plain that no human covenants can, in this sense, impose a superadded obligation; for God's law is absolutely

* Ezek. xviii. 18, 19.

† P. 173, Belfast Edition.

perfect, and necessarily binds to every possible duty, both as to matter and manner, according to the station which we fill. But if by superadded obligation be meant a further and very awful consideration, which also should have a strong influence in prompting us to the faithful discharge of his duty; in this sense the covenants undoubtedly contain an additional obligation; for, besides the authority of the divine law obliging us, we, by our own voluntary deed, likewise bind ourselves to the conscientious performance of the same things.

Those who approve of the original covenants themselves, cannot consistently deny the propriety of the Auchensaugh renovation, which is also mentioned in this article of our Terms; seeing it must be obvious to every one who hath properly perused that deed that there is not the least substantial alteration. After omitting the designations, Noblemen, Gentlemen, &c. which could not apply to them, being only a few private Christians, with one minister and a probationer, and after adding a few marginal notes, accommodating them to the real circumstances in which the swearers then were, the old covenants remain as they were. There are, indeed, accompanying that renovation, an enlarged Acknowledgement of sins, and an Engagement to duties. These, also, were necessary, in order to accommodate the solemn transaction unto the existing circumstances of the nation in which the swearers lived, as well as unto their own condition.

It will not be refused, that in the Engagement to duties connected with the Auchensaugh renovation, our zealous forefathers use some remarkably strong, and perhaps rather incautious expressions, in declaring their resolution not to submit unto some of the public burdens which they particularly specify. But they evidently considered their submission unto these as necessarily implying a homologation of the present constitutions, civil and ecclesiastic; and, on that footing, refused to yield. In the leading and general principle, then, that it is inconsistent for Dissenters to submit unto such things, as, strictly speaking, imply an approbation of the present constitutions, or a proper recognizing of the constituted authorities, they and we are perfectly agreed. But, as it is difficult to draw the exact line of distinction between these things which, in the very nature of them, abstracting from any question for conscience' sake, properly imply the recognizing of the existing power under which they are done, and those things which do not, we need not be surprised though there be some diversity, both in opinion and practice, concerning the yielding or not yielding to some particular specified national burdens.

It is abundantly obvious that all the taxations in general which our noble martyrs, in the late persecution, positively re-

fused to pay, were imposed avowedly for the purpose of suppressing the very cause which these martyrs were endeavouring, at the hazard of their lives, to maintain; and not simply for the general and undefined support of the existing government. This brought the matter closely home to their conscience, as faithful witnesses for Christ and his persecuted cause. But as no taxations in our time are, as yet, imposed for a similar purpose, it is surely pushing the matter too far to consider the bare yielding unto them, for wrath's sake, as necessarily involving a contradiction to the martyrs' testimony. Even these martyrs themselves, as far as we can learn, yielded to the general burdens which were not of the description above specified; and yet they openly disowned the powers which then were. Swearing oaths of allegiance to the existing authorities; holding places of public trust under them; praying, in the formal and unqualified manner, for a blessing, prosperity, and success unto them, in their official capacity as our rulers; and formally recognizing their several courts of judgment, are the principal things which our Testimony specifies, as necessarily implying an approbation of the united constitution, and a direct acknowledgment of the existing power. But it does not view any thing else in the same light as matters stand at present. So long, therefore, as we are enabled to keep ourselves free of these, and while we do not find the general national burdens demanded as any proof of our loyalty, nor for the purpose of suppressing the cause which we are endeavouring, through grace, to maintain, we cannot consider ourselves as convicted of inconsistency, though we be obliged to allow that those who are set over us "have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure; and we are in great distress." What we chiefly intend by introducing the Auchensaugh Bond into our Terms, is the approbation of renewing the covenants, as it was then done, at that place, without overlooking any of the reformation attainments, either in church or state; and by giving a faithful testimony against all the defections and prevailing sins in both. But we do not reckon ourselves responsible for every unwary expression which our forefathers have used.

ON ARTICLE V.

In the fifth article of our Terms, we require an owning of the scriptural testimonies, and earnest contendings of Christ's faithful witnesses; and especially of our own Judicial Act and Tes-

timony, stating and vindicating the various reformation attainments of these lands in which we dwell.

In the instructive visions of the Revelation, we find the faithful martyrs of Jesus represented him as slain, not only "for the Word of God," but also "for the testimony which they held."* If, therefore, we mean to sustain the honourable character of public witnesses for Christ and his cause, and to be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises, it seems to be highly requisite that we should exhibit an impartial testimony in defence of all the precious reformation attainments, and in opposition to all the departures therefrom, which have so mournfully stained our national character, and provoked the Lord to plead a controversy against us.

Meanwhile, in exhibiting our testimony, we make no pretensions to infallibility or perfection. Our design, we hope, is good, but we are very sensible that human weakness and infirmity must always be discernible in our best performances. We do not assert, either with respect to our own, or the other testimonies which we approve, that there are no incautious expressions in these compositions. Considering the time, and the peculiarly trying circumstances, in which the compilers of them existed, and considering that they were men of like passions with others, it would, perhaps, be rather unreasonable to expect so much. But if none of the precious truths, stated and vindicated in these testimonies, be given up; if none of the errors or immoralities which they condemn be countenanced; or, in other words, if the whole substance be conscientiously retained; we mean not to differ with those who may plead that some particular modes of expression might be altered for the better.

Let it also be carefully observed here, that, with regard to the Deeds of which we speak, we wish to be understood in the same sense as before, concerning the Confession of Faith and the Covenants. It is only after diligently perusing, pondering, and comparing these testimonies with the Word of God, and after finding them to be founded upon, and agreeable unto it, that we mean to rank them among the subordinate standards of our church. But, as two, or more, cannot consistently walk together in church-fellowship, unless they be agreed in sentiment concerning the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church, and concerning the proper way of glorifying God upon earth, we reckon it exceedingly requisite that this agreement should be properly ascertained. For that important purpose, amongst others, these testimonies seem to be very

much calculated. And it is only to such of them as truly deserve the characteristic epithets of SCRIPTURAL AND FAITHFUL, that we require the assent of our church members. If any are disposed to question the propriety of applying these designations, either to our own, or to the rest which we approve, we are always ready, as opportunity offers, to reason the matter with them. If we can agree, it is well; "Let us strive together for the faith of the Gospel, and continue steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." If we cannot agree, we must part in peace. For we never entertained the remotest thought that these matters were to be adjusted by any other weapons than those of Scripture and reason, under the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit.

ON ARTICLE VI.

THE last article of our Terms respects a holy and blameless conversation before men. On this, we apprehend, there is no need to make any remarks. Even those who seek but for the form of godliness must admit its propriety. And certainly those who seriously study to reach the life and power of true religion will, at once, approve of giving this qualification a place amongst the conditions of admission to sacred privileges, in the sanctuary of that divine Lord, whose name is THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL; who hath taught his church to sing, "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever;" and who hath solemnly declared, "that without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

In proposing the above Terms of communion, we wish a difference to be made between persons holding, proclaiming, and propagating sentiments in religion, opposite to those which are recognized by our Terms, and persons who may be, comparatively, ignorant, or have private views of their own, but are willing to be farther instructed. The former must be positively debarred from church fellowship, whereas milder treatment is due to the latter.*

Let it also be remembered, that there is a material difference between church-communion, properly so called, and private occasional communion, with those who may agree in the great

essentials of salvation, through a crucified Saviour. Church-communion, among the professing members of Christ's mystical body, we consider as lying chiefly in their conscientiously walking together, and enjoying mutual comfort in the regular observation of all public Gospel ordinances, in general, and joint participation of the solemn seals of the new covenant, in particular; as these are dispensed by the ministers of religion, who are vested with office, according to the laws of Christ. This, necessarily, requires unanimity in all those things which belong to the constitution of the church, in her organized capacity; such as, doctrines to be believed, a certain mode of worship to be observed, a form of government to be exercised, and discipline to be administered. As it doth not appear that the church, in her complete and organized capacity, can exist without any of these articles, so neither is it easy to conceive how persons holding jarring sentiments on these important subjects can consistently enjoy church fellowship with each other. Private Christian communion, we apprehend, consists in the joint discharge of those religious duties which are not peculiar to official characters as such, but are common to them and all Christians at large, in their individual capacity. Of this kind we may reckon reading the Scriptures; religious conversation, as opportunity offers, in the course of providence; occasional prayer with the sick, when desired; praising God in the family, when providentially lodged together; joint craving of Heaven's blessing on the provision of our table, and such like. From private and occasional communion, with Christians of other denominations, in things like these, we never thought of debarring our people; though we cannot help being of opinion, that church fellowship should ever be regulated by some such scriptural terms as those which we have endeavoured to exhibit and explain.

Upon the whole, after taking a review of our principles, as founded upon the Word of God, and summarily comprehended in the subordinate standards of the church, we are still persuaded that it is our duty to stand upon the same footing on which we have always hitherto stood, as a distinct body of professing Christians; endeavouring to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. Amidst all the revolutions in sentiment, whereby the present age is distinguished, we can find no reason for considering our avowed principles in any other light than that in which we have ever viewed them. Notwithstanding, for the satisfaction of those who have repeatedly desired some farther information, we have exhibited the above Explanation and Defence, it is humbly apprehended, that no greater concessions or allowances than those which we have made, can be reasonably expected of men, professing, as

we do, to adhere unto the whole of our covenanted reformation, both in church and state.

It only remains, that we all, unanimously and seriously, supplicate the throne of God, for grace, “to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.”

THE END.

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AUG 3 1945

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2006

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